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THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES.

THE PRIMITIVE

HEBREW CHRISTIAN CHURCH

OF

JERUSALEM;

ITS

HISTORY, CHARACTER, AND CONSTITUTION.

BY THE

REV. J. B. CARTWRIGHT, A.M.,

MINISTER OF THE EPISCOPAL JEWS' CHAPEL.

LONDON:
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MDCCCXLII.

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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

MICHAEL SOLOMON,

LORD BISHOP OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF

ENGLAND AND IRELAND

At Jerusalem,

THIS ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE

THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF

THE CITY OF HIS FATHERS,

THE MOTHER CHURCH OF CHRISTENDOM,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

WITH EARNEST PRAYER THAT THE SPIRIT

OF ITS FIRST BISHOP, ST. JAMES,

MAY REST UPON HIM.

PREFACE.

AMONGST the most remarkable events connected with the history and proceedings of the Church in modern times, it is impossible not to class the appointment of an Anglican Bishop to Jerusalem; whose spiritual jurisdiction is to extend over the English clergy and congregations; and over those who may place themselves under his Episcopal authority in Palestine, Syria, Chaldea, Egypt, and Abyssinia; whose chief missionary care will be directed to the conversion of the Jews, to their protection, and to their useful employment; and who is, moreover, charged by the Primate of the English Church, to establish and maintain, as far as in him lies, relations of Christian charity with other Churches represented

at Jerusalem, and in particular with the orthodox Greek Church.*

To have hinted at the possibility of such a measure twelve months ago, would have been considered by most persons a bold speculation; and still more so, if it had been suggested that the individual to be advanced to the honourable office should be a Jewish convert to Christianity.

And yet all this has been accomplished in the good providence of God. The proposal has been nobly made by the leading Protestant Sovereign of Continental Europe, accompanied by the liberal appropriation of a large sum of money sufficient for half of the necessary endowment fund—it has been cordially accepted by the Primate and other prelates of our Church—it has received the sanction of

* See Statement of Proceedings relating to the establishment of a Bishopric of the United Church of England and Ireland at Jerusalem. Published by authority.

the Sovereign of these realms, of the Houses of Parliament, and of two successive executive Governments. The Episcopal dignity has, it is generally understood, been offered to one, on whom the eyes of almost every zealous friend of the Jews in this and many other countries would naturally have been fixed, had they been aware of the project; and it has been by him respectfully and nobly declined, in order that the Protestant Episcopate at Jerusalem might be conferred on a Christian Israelite. The honoured individual thus designated, has received consecration, has been conveyed to the land of his fathers, by the orders of our Government, and under the naval flag of Great Britain; and is now abiding as the Episcopal representative of the Church of England, and as a missionary bishop to the Jews, in the city where David reigned, where the Son of God suffered for the redemption of mankind, and where the Apostle St. James, the first Christian bishop, presided over

the first Christian Church—the Church of the Circumcision.

Surely, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes; and if the London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews had done nothing more, during thirty years of patient labour, than, by God's help, to prepare the minds of a numerous body of the clergy and people of the United Church of England and Ireland, to approve and help forward so unexpected an appointment, its members would have had cause to thank God and take courage. Sincere Churchmen are now summoned to rally round our venerated Primate, to support the measure to which he has pledged himself and the Church; and to unite their voices with his, in proclaiming to the "daughter of Zion," through the ministry of one of Zion's children, on Zion's own hallowed hill, "Behold, thy salvation cometh." We have been solemnly and publicly called upon by the Bishop* of the most im-

* See the Bishop of London's Sermon at St.

portant and influential diocese in the world, to "pray that the good work itself may prosper; and that our Church, so encouraged and assisted, may be the honoured instrument of hastening the fulfilment of that prophecy in which all the nations of the earth are so nearly concerned, '*Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice with joy with her, all ye that mourn for her . . . . for thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem . . . . it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; that they shall come, and see my glory.*'"*

And whilst noticing the strong grounds which the zealous friends of Israel, and the members of the Church of Eng-

Paul's, before the King of Prussia,. on Sunday, January 30, 1842, pp. 24, 25.

* Isaiah lxvi. 10, 12, 13, 18.

land in general, have for taking a deep interest in the establishment of a Protestant bishopric at Jerusalem, it may not be thought out of place to observe, that nowhere could more lively feelings of thankfulness and joy be excited than amongst the congregation of the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, with whom the newly-appointed Bishop had for many years worshipped, and to whom he had often taken part in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments—a congregation numbering amongst its members at least fifty adult Christian Israelites, and nearly ninety Jewish children brought up in the profession of the Christian faith.*

* The following is a copy of an Address presented to the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, by the minister and congregation of the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, on an interesting occasion, which will be long remembered by many, shortly before his departure for Jerusalem. It is inserted here as an affectionate memorial of that occasion, and as a testimony to the views with which the appointment was regarded:—

"*To the Right Reverend Father in God, Michael Solomon, by Divine Providence, Lord Bishop of*

It was in the deep and solemn interest there manifested, that the idea of inves-

the United Church of England and Ireland, at Jerusalem.

"We, *the Minister and Congregation* of the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, cannot allow your Lordship to depart from among us, without expressing our deep interest in that wonderful dispensation of God's providence under which you have been called by the voice of our National Church, as expressed through her highest authorities, to return to the land of your forefathers.

"It is with thankfulness to God that we see you invested with the highest order of the Christian ministry, for the express purpose of fulfilling the long-neglected command to 'speak comfortably to Jerusalem,' as well as of presiding over the congregations and members of our Protestant nation scattered in the Holy Land and its contiguous districts, and of conveying to the decayed but venerable Churches of the East the authoritative assurance of our own beloved Church's sympathy in their afflictions, and her humble desire to impart unto them 'some spiritual gift' out of the abundance of knowledge and privilege with which we ourselves have been favoured.

"We regard it as an earnest of the Divine blessing, that the Bishop of Jerusalem is a Hebrew of the Hebrews, looking for the consolation of Israel, an earnest believer in the promises of God

tigating the subject of the following pages was first suggested. It was at one

to his ancient people, and especially charged, in the name of a distinguished branch of Christ's holy Catholic Church, to say 'to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh.' We cannot but regard this fact as a striking pledge to the depressed Churches of the East, that whilst you offer no compromise with their lamentable corruptions, you claim no 'dominion over their faith,' but desire to be a 'helper of their joy;' and that neither you nor the Church which sends you forth, have any sympathy with the domineering spirit of the Church of Rome, which requires all to bow down to the idol of her pretended supremacy, before she will admit them to the common privilege of Christians, or allow the hope of salvation to a perishing sinner.

"Your appointment, under these peculiar circumstances, is a testimony to the scriptural truth, that Jerusalem, and not Rome, is the 'mother of us all;' that the Western Papacy is neither fitted nor destined to be the great centre of unity to a distracted Church or the channel of salvation to a ruined world. It is amongst the signs which God is now vouchsafing to our astonished eyes, that He will arise and have mercy upon Zion; and it thus directs our faith to that period of blessedness when, on the combined authority both of the Old and the New Testaments, we are assured that the house

time proposed by those in authority to give the new Episcopate the designation of the Lord at Jerusalem 'shall be called a house of prayer for all people.'

"In contemplating this glorious promise, we remember that the way to its accomplishment lies through much tribulation. The Word of truth informs us, that as Satan's baneful influence in this world draws to its close and he knows that his time is short, his wrath will be great, and his rage against Christ and his Church manifested to the very utmost. What obstacles he may be permitted to raise to your work, with what trials, whether personal or official, he may harass your life, with what dangers he may attempt to discourage your progress, we know not; but we earnestly commend you to Him who has said, 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee.'

"Permit us now, in concluding our address, to advert to the long connexion that has subsisted between us during the many years that you and your beloved family have been members of our body. As a minister of Christ, you have frequently borne a part amongst us in the preaching of God's Word, and in the administration of Christ's ordinances.

"You have bidden us farewell, and closed your ministrations amongst us for the present, in the character of a Christian Bishop.

of "the Bishopric of the Church of St. James at Jerusalem," for which the

"We account it a high distinction that the first Hebrew Christian Bishop of Jerusalem since the time immediately following the apostolic age, has gone forth from amongst *us*, that his first ministrations were held in our house of prayer, and his first sermon preached to *us*. The recollection of that interesting occasion will long be cherished in our minds; and we trust that the effect of it will be exhibited in our increased devotedness to the cause of God and Israel.

"We beg, in taking leave of you, to assure you of our respect and affection. We pray God to protect and keep you and your family, and so to direct and bless you, that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. We will pray more earnestly for the peace of Jerusalem; and when God blesses you there, we beg you to pray for your old friends and fellow-worshippers,—the minister and congregation of the Episcopal Jews' Chapel.

"We ask the parting blessing of a Christian Bishop, expressed in the simple language of our daily prayer, 'The Lord be with you;' and our hearts, by God's help, shall continually respond, 'And with thy spirit.'

"We remain, with sincere respect, your Lordship's affectionate friends.

"*November* 23, 1841."

present title was eventually substituted. This name has doubtless in many instances served a good purpose in reviving historical recollections; inquiry was naturally excited; and it was principally in the desire to afford information on a long-neglected subject, to a kind and inquiring congregation, that this work was commenced. In the process of investigation it has grown to a size not originally contemplated; and it is now submitted in its present form, as a contribution towards the history of Christianity amongst the Jews during the earliest and most interesting period; with fervent prayer that, through the blessing of God, it may promote a deeper interest in the condition and prospects of the Jews, and a more consistent attachment to the principles and government of our apostolical branch of Christ's Church. And perhaps these two subjects are more closely connected than many persons imagine. Our Church order, our Liturgy, and especially the very great prominence

given to the Holy Scriptures in our services, give us a mighty vantage ground in addressing the Jews. And when these are rightly appreciated by ourselves, and faithfully presented to that people in the unaffected simplicity of Christian zeal, and with humble dependence on God's blessing, we may regard it as our Church's brightest ornament and the best pledge of her security that, "more especially is she qualified, by the purity of her doctrine, by her exclusive appeal to the Word of God, by the apostolical order and decency of her ceremonies, as well as of her government and discipline, to undertake the charitable work of bringing the ancient people of God into the fold and family of his dear Son, and of restoring to them the enjoyment of their spiritual birthright and inheritance. And the Church is now lifting up her voice and crying aloud to them, '*Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*'"*

* Bishop of London's Sermon, page 22.

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THE Church of Christ was not formed during the abode on earth of its Divine Redeemer and Head. He came to lay

the great foundation-stone on which the Church was to be built; and having chosen twelve apostles to be the future instruments of carrying into effect his gracious purpose under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit, he gave them the promise, "Upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* In conformity with this declaration, immediately before his ascension into heaven, he left them the glorious commission to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded. There was but one restriction laid upon them, and that was, that they were to *begin at Jerusalem.* He who during the whole of his own personal ministry on earth declared, that he was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, was

* Matt. xvi. 18.

pleased to lay this condition upon the ministry of his chosen apostles, that his Gospel should be preached *to the Jew first.* As in accordance with ancient prophecy the sure foundation-stone of the salvation of a ruined world had been laid in Zion, and the great sacrifice had been offered up in Jerusalem, the chief city of the Jews; so likewise was it the purpose of the Saviour that the foundation of a visible Church should be laid in the same honoured spot, that the parent stock of the mystical olive-tree should be planted there, and that the history of Christianity should attest to the very ends of the earth that "salvation is of the Jews."

And not only was the Church of Jerusalem to be the first in order of time and the honoured parent of all other Churches, but it likewise enjoyed the singular distinction of being founded and established by the conjoint labours of the entire body of the twelve apostles. All other Churches were founded by the

labours of one or two apostles or other ministers of Christ; but the first awakening address at Jerusalem was delivered by an apostle in the name and in the presence of all; and the original Hebrew Church, from which all other Churches sprung, was collected and perfectly constituted under their united ministrations. It was a lively type of the holy and heavenly Jerusalem, whose walls have twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

The inspired writer of the Acts of the Apostles tells us, that after the ascension of Jesus Christ the eleven apostles waited in Jerusalem for the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, according to the direction of their departed Lord. In the meantime, acting under Divine inspiration, they proceeded to fill up their appointed number by the admission of Matthias to the dignity and office of the apostolate

* Rev. xxi. 14

in place of the traitor Judas. On the day of Pentecost, when they were all with one accord in one place, the Holy Ghost descended upon them with such extraordinary and miraculous manifestations of his power, as not only to afford to themselves the undoubted assurance of his presence, but likewise to attract the immediate attention of the multitude of devout Israelites who were assembled at Jerusalem at this festival. It was the distinguished privilege of the Apostle Peter to open the apostolical commission, and to preach the first Christian sermon. The word spoken was accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost; consciences were awakened; and the heart-stirring inquiry ran through the astonished audience, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* The answer was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." The blessed result is thus described, "They that

* Acts ii. 37, 38.

gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." On that memorable occasion the "Church of Jerusalem" was founded; and the first stones were laid of that spiritual edifice, which is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."*

Thus, on the very first day of its establishment, the infant Church became, from its very numbers and the notoriety of its origin, a distinct and visible body, to which every day brought an increase of strength, for "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."†

The miraculous power exercised by the apostles, together with their bold fidelity in preaching the Gospel and in attesting the resurrection of the crucified Jesus, continued to produce the greatest excitement amongst all

* Eph. ii. 20. † Acts ii. 47.

classes of persons in Jerusalem. The remarkable cure of the lame man, who was well known as being daily laid at one of the gates of the temple for the purpose of asking alms from the worshippers as they passed into the sacred place, was the occasion of another public address by St. Peter;* and although the indignation of the chief priests and their friends of the Sadduceean party was by this time roused, and they hastily apprehended Peter and John, yet the numbers of the Church had already been increased to five thousand,† and the multitude at large "glorified God for that which was done."

On the following day the two apostles were brought before a formidable tribunal, consisting of rulers, and elders, and scribes, headed by Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. The sacred writer has

* Acts iii. 12. † Acts iv. 4, 21.

thus handed down the names of these early opposers of the Gospel, two of whom had already distinguished themselves by the unjust condemnation of its Author. Caiaphas was in reality the high priest, but his father-in-law, Annas, or Ananus, having himself filled the office for fifteen years, and who by his influence obtained it for five of his sons in succession, seems to have kept the power very much in his own hands, and to have been generally known by the name of Annas the High Priest. It has also been conjectured* that "John" was the celebrated Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was the first president of the Sanhedrim after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dark hopelessness of whose dying moments has been described by the Jews themselves in affecting language, often quoted by Christians as descriptive of the present state of that people. These

* See Lightfoot's works, vol. x. p. 32, Pitman's edition.

assembled authorities were, however, astonished by the boldness and power of the apostles, confounded by the presence of the healed man, and restrained from violence by the evident favour shown by the multitude to the new doctrine. They could only threaten, where as yet they durst not punish.

The Church advanced rapidly in numbers and in public estimation, whilst it lost nothing of its holy fervour or its self-denying devotedness. For a time the sacred enclosure was divinely shielded from hypocrisy, lukewarmness, and false profession. The signal judgment on Ananias and Sapphira excited a holy reverential fear, served to repress the hasty and inconsiderate adoption of Christianity, warned all to count the cost, and gave a solemn attestation to the authority of the apostles and the reality of the Divine presence in the Church. "Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and

women."* The Jewish rulers made another attempt to put down the new doctrine by the hand of violence, and arrested the whole body of apostles. But the interposition of an angel, and the manifest favour of the multitude, gave weight to the prudent counsel of Gamaliel; and the apostles, after having proclaimed the Gospel most fully and faithfully before the enraged council, were beaten and dismissed, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame" for the name of Jesus Christ. On this occasion, the high priest bore testimony to the numbers and importance of the rising Church in the indignant charge, "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine."† The ruling party amongst the Jews at this time were chiefly Sadducees, and the grand offence of the Gospel in their eyes was the prominence which it gave to the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. On this

* Acts v. 14. † Acts v. 28.

point the Pharisees were sound and scriptural; and it was natural that they should be unwilling to concur in the condemnation of the apostles for preaching this doctrine, however obnoxious the Gospel might be to them on other grounds. The great Pharisaic doctor, Gamaliel, is celebrated in the Jewish writings, and his name is still mentioned with veneration. It is said that by his mother's side he was of the seed of David. He was grandson of Hillel, one of the most learned rabbies of that day. St. Paul was one of his rabbinical pupils. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, having held the office of president of the Sanhedrim for several years.*

* Burton's Lectures on Eccl. Hist., vol. i. pp. 59, 60. Wolfius, (Biblioth. Heb. part ii. p. 822,) in his catalogue of Jewish Mishnic doctors, states as the opinion of some, that Gamaliel was son of that Simeon who took the infant Saviour in his arms in the temple. It is said in the Mishna that when R. Gamaliel died, the glory of the law ceased.

The growing exigencies of the Church, owing to the daily increase of its members, the majority of whom we may conclude were native inhabitants of Jerusalem,* whilst a considerable number were Jews of the dispersion, led to the solemn appointment of the order of deacons. Upon this enlargement of the Christian ministry, "the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly;

There appears no ground for the assertion of Baronius, that he became a zealous Christian and buried the body of Stephen, beyond that of a spurious document of an earlier age. Jewish testimony is all on the other side. For further particulars and references to Jewish writings, see Lightfoot's works, vol. iii. p. 188; viii. p. 81, Pitman's edition.

* They are called respectively Hebrews and Grecians (Acts vi. 1), (Εβραιοι and Ελληνισται). There were great numbers of the latter present on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 5, 9—11); but their dissatisfaction with the distribution of the Church's bounty intimates that they were the smaller party.

and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."*

Thus within the compass of probably not more than a few months† after the first promulgation of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost, a large and flourishing Church was established at Jerusalem, the members of which were collected, not only from amongst the poor, but likewise to a great extent from the wealthier classes; not only from the ranks of the multitude, but also from the distinguished families of the priesthood. During this short period, it pleased the great Head of the Church to stay the hand of persecu-

* Acts vi. 7.

† The precise length of this period is not stated in Scripture itself. The system of chronology adopted in the margin of our authorized version includes the martyrdom of Stephen in the events of the first year of the Church's history. This seems to have been an ancient opinion, and has been supported by many learned authorities in modern times. It is perfectly consistent with the inspired narrative. Hales assigns a period of three years, but the reasons are merely conjectural.

tion, to preserve the purity of the Church in the full tide of popularity by miraculous interposition,* and to give time for the complete and evident foundation of the "Church of Jerusalem." It was hitherto the only Church of Christ in the world, the sole representative of the Church catholic; and as such was governed and administered by the whole college of apostles.

The large increase of the Church began now more decidedly to rouse all the bad passions of the different parties amongst the Jews, who, as at the time of the crucifixion of our Lord, were driven by their common hatred of the Gospel, to lay aside their mutual animosities, and to combine against the further spread of Christianity. The powerful preaching of St. Stephen, one of the newly-appointed deacons, was instrumental both in advancing the cause of the Gospel and in calling forth the violence of its opposers.

* Acts v. 11, 13.

It appears that at this time there was a great influx of foreign Jews, probably at one of the great festivals, and that they had their separate synagogues in Jerusalem. There are said to have been four hundred and eighty synagogues in Jerusalem, some of which, it is highly probable, were erected by foreign Jews, and attended by them on those solemn occasions which brought them in great crowds to the Holy City. Stephen disputed with persons belonging to the synagogues of the Libertines and Cyreneans and Alexandrians, and them of Cilicia and Asia; and when "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke,"* they had recourse to a new method of attack, which proved more successful than the former. They no longer ran the risk of offending the multitude by attacking the doctrine, or calling in question the miraculous facts of the Gospel; they carefully avoided all allu-

* Acts vi. 10.

sion to the prominent subject of the resurrection, which would only sow dissension in their own body; but they brought forward a plausible accusation, which represented Stephen as a blasphemer of the law, an opposer of their hallowed institutions, and an enemy of his country. The artifice succeeded both with the council and with the multitude; and although the mock solemnities of a trial were at first observed, and Stephen had an opportunity of delivering a bold and faithful defence, an infuriated multitude impatiently waited for its conclusion, when the pretended forms of law were suffered to degenerate into the madness of popular violence; and the holy martyr was hastily dragged out of the city and stoned to death. The constancy, faith, and meekness, of his last moments afford a striking testimony to the power and truth of the religion for which he suffered: he prayed for his cruel persecutors, and in the animating view of future

glory fell asleep in Jesus; and his name has ever since been cherished in the remembrance of the Church, which honours him as having been chosen by his gracious Master to lead the van in the noble army of Christian martyrs.

The death of Stephen was destined to open a new scene. The tide of popularity was suddenly turned, and the Church had now to learn that it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Lord. The worst passions of a fickle multitude were wrought upon by misrepresentation; and the cruel death of the first martyr was the signal for a great persecution against the Church of Jerusalem. At this time, Saul of Tarsus, the future apostle, "made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison."*

The immediate result of this is closely connected with the establishment of the Church at Jerusalem. It led to the

* Acts viii. 3.

establishment of additional Churches of the circumcision in Judea and Samaria, and ultimately in countries far beyond the confines of Palestine, prior to the formation of any Church whatever amongst the Gentiles. At the commencement of the persecution, "they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles," and they "went everywhere preaching the word." *

The twelve apostles, it will be observed, still remained with their number unbroken at Jerusalem. This is expressly stated by the sacred historian, and we may conclude that it was in full accordance with the purpose of their Divine Master and with the direction of the Holy Spirit. We may equally infer that the Church of Jerusalem continued under their joint administration and control.

In the meantime the Gospel spread amongst the Jews of Palestine and Syria.

* Acts viii. 1, 4.

The persecuting commission on which Saul was bound to Damascus, incidentally proves that in that city Christianity had gained such ground as to reach the ears of the authorities at Jerusalem, and to call for vigorous measures of extirpation.

Many of the scattered members of the Church travelled even as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch; but still, the sacred narrative particularly tells us that they preached "the word to none but unto the Jews only." * The newly formed

* Acts xi. 19. Some have supposed that the Gospel was preached on this occasion to the Gentiles of Antioch, and that this is intimated in verse 20, "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus." The common reading in this passage is "ελαλουν προς τους Ελληνιστας." The word "Ελληνισται," occurs in Acts vi. 1, and ix. 29, in both which places it is translated "Grecians," in our authorized version, and plainly refers, as well as in this passage, to the Hellenists, or Jews of the Dispersion. Griesbach and some others have ventured to substitute "Ελληνας," on the mere authority of two MSS. supported by the Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic,

Hebrew-Christian Churches in Samaria were favoured by the apostolical visit of Peter and John, and Barnabas was sub-

and Vulgate versions, by some of the Fathers, and by many modern commentators. Dr. Bloomfield, in his notes on the Greek Testament, observes, "The testimony of versions is, in a case like this, of no great weight, and that of the Fathers even less; especially as they in some instances cite 'Ελληνιστας.' Moreover, of the two MSS. which here have 'Ελληνας,' the principal one, (namely, the Alexandrian,) has this very reading, in the place of 'Ελληνιστας,' (chap. ix. 29), where it is by all editors admitted to be a false reading. The same may be said of two of the versions. And surely what was a false alteration in one case may be so in the other." He goes on to show that there is no internal evidence in favour of the substituted reading, in the construction of the two verses 19, 20, and that the consistency of the narrative is opposed to it.

Schleusner is of opinion, that if Ελληνιστας be the true reading, it must of necessity signify "Gentiles," notwithstanding the acknowledged general use of the word for "Jews of the Dispersion." (Schleusner. Lex., Nov. Test. ad voc. Ελληνιστης.) For this conjecture no grounds are adduced. The sacred narrative is sufficiently clear. The scattered members of the Church of Jerusalem were not prepared,

sequently sent to those of Antioch and its vicinity, where he was joined by Saul of Tarsus, now no longer a persecutor, but an

nor indeed expressly commissioned by the Holy Ghost, to preach to the Gentiles; the honour of opening the door of faith to them being assigned to the Apostle Peter. Therefore they went preaching to Jews only. The word "Ιουδαιοις," in verse 19, is used in its general sense as including all classes of Jews. But *some of these* preachers of the Gospel were themselves "Hellenists," men of Cyprus and Cyrene, and therefore when they came to Antioch, they found many Israelites of their own class, besides numerous proselytes to Judaism, who might be included under the same name, to whom they addressed themselves with peculiar power and acceptance. And thus the Church of Antioch, though subsequently Gentile in its character, was in its original foundation a Church of believing Israelites, more easily disposed from their language, association, and other circumstances, to an early amalgamation with Gentile converts, than the Church of Jerusalem. The grand commencement of the work among the Gentiles is related in Acts xiii. 1—3, where the work to which the Lord had called Barnabas and Saul, was evidently that of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles, upon which they then solemnly entered.—Compare Acts xiv. 26, 27.

apostle of Christ. Thus was the Gospel distinction of "*the Jew first*" decidedly carried out, and Hebrew-Christian Churches were formed and flourished before a single Gentile Church existed, or even an individual Gentile had been admitted as such into the Church of Christ.

But to return more particularly to the Church of Jerusalem. The persecution just mentioned lasted, probably, about five years, and seemed to have been permitted for the gracious purpose of extending the Church of Christ, and the blessings of the Gospel to the Jews of other countries, and of forming distinct Churches amongst them. Much of its severity was doubtless mitigated by the departure of Saul, who after his conversion was exposed to the malice of his former associates, who continually sought to put him to death. During the period in which the Gospel was confined to Jerusalem, the number of believers, though very large, formed but one Church, and are spoken of

in Scripture as "The Church." At the close of this persecution, we find for the first time mention of "Churches," in the plural number. An order from the Roman emperor Caligula to erect his statue in the temple raised a national ferment of another kind amongst the Jews, and so drew off their attention from the Christians. "Then had *the Churches* rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." * Societies of Christians, formed in the distant cities of Palestine, were thus considered as distinct Churches, and appear for a time to have continued under the government of the apostles generally. St. Peter seems to have taken a prominent part in the visitation and confirmation of these Churches, as he is on this occasion spoken of as passing "through all quarters." †

* Acts ix. 31. † Acts ix. 32.

As other Churches were founded, and more especially when the admission of Gentiles had been practically established by the ministry of St. Peter, and St. Paul had openly entered on his work as the Apostle of the Gentiles, we find an important change taking place in the government of the Church of Jerusalem. Hitherto that Church, when standing alone, has been represented as under the united administration of the twelve. On the appointment of deacons, the twelve are said to have acted conjointly.* After the formation of the Church at Samaria under the preaching and baptism of Philip the deacon, *the apostles* sent Peter and John to confirm the Church and communicate the gifts of the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands. Thus the extension of the Church under providential circumstances gradually opened the way for the fulfilment of the apostolical commission to go into all the world and preach the

* Acts vi. 2.

Gospel to every creature, and must soon have called them forth from their united labours in the city of Jerusalem. Accordingly at this period, eleven or twelve years after its first establishment, we find the first intimation of the government of the Church of Jerusalem being intrusted to one individual. When the temporary suspension of their own national troubles once more afforded an opportunity to the Jewish rulers and people of venting their malice against the disciples of Jesus, they found a willing agent in Herod Agrippa, who undertook to persecute the Church, and, as the commencement of his bloody career, seized and put to death James the brother of John. For what reason this apostle was singled out we are not informed; but, in order to gratify the Jews, he proposed to sacrifice Peter also, and accordingly put him in prison, intending to make a special exhibition of him to an infuriated multitude. Peter, was, however, destined for further service to the Church,

and was accordingly released by the interposition of an angel. On his deliverance from prison, he presented himself at the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were assembled for prayer. Having declared to them the miraculous circumstances of his deliverance, on retiring to another place for security he bade them "Go, show these things *unto James*, and the brethren."* This is the first instance of an individual being distinguished from the general body of the apostles, as having pre-eminence in the "Church of Jerusalem." From this time we may consider St. James as the "Bishop of Jerusalem," and in that character we find him receiving St. Paul† on his visit to Jerusalem many years afterwards, and appealing to his own observation of the flourishing state of the Church, as containing tens of thousands of Jewish members. "Thou

* Acts xii. 17. † Acts xxi. 18.

seest, brother, how many thousands* of Jews there are which believe." But this subject belongs to another chapter.

We have thus traced the history of the Church of Jerusalem during the first twelve years of its existence. It was now fully established under the united ministrations of the twelve apostles, who up to this period appear to have resided at Jerusalem, and only to have been absent on short visits to the dependent Churches of Palestine. Twelve years of apostolic labours had passed away, and as yet our Lord's commission had not been carried by his chosen messengers beyond the confines of the Holy Land. St. Paul himself, the apostle of the Gentiles, waited a considerable portion of this time for final and definite instructions to enter upon the very work for which he was originally called; and that such instructions were in due time given by express inspiration of the Holy Spirit we are

* μυριαδες, tens of thousands.

distinctly informed.* We are apt to ascribe the delay that took place in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, to a degree of ignorance and prejudice that lingered in the minds of the apostles. But have we any warrant for such a conclusion in the Word of God? And if, until the mission to Cornelius, it be true that they did not fully comprehend the purpose of God, is it not equally evident that they *did* understand it afterwards? And yet a considerable time was suffered to elapse before any further steps were taken. Are we to suppose that St. Paul did not understand his own peculiar designation, when he tells us in his address before Agrippa, that at the time of his miraculous conversion, the Lord Jesus declared that he sent him *to the Gentiles* to open *their* eyes, and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and so far from acknowledging his ignorance or

* Acts xiii. 1—3.

backwardness in this particular work, he says, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision?"

The truth is, that the whole work of carrying out the commission of Christ was placed under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, without whom the apostles took no single step. They waited for the promise of the Spirit before they preached to the Jews on the day of Pentecost. The same Spirit wisely chose the fitting time for the opening of the Gospel to the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius; and under the same holy influence Paul and Barnabas waited until they were solemnly sent forth from Antioch to proclaim salvation to the world at large. In like manner the delay of the twelve apostles at Jerusalem was in accordance with the gracious purpose of the Redeemer, and not the accidental result of prejudice or ignorance. "There might be room for much serious speculation if we were to consider why

the further propagation of the Gospel was delayed to so long a period. But in questions of this kind where the first principles of our knowledge must be drawn from revelation, it is sufficient to know what God *has* done, and the deepest reasoner will never be able to demonstrate *why* He did so." . . . . "God doubtless had wise reasons for laying the foundations of the Gospel in Palestine, and for not extending it to other countries, till it was firmly established in Judea." *

Mosheim has the following observations to the same effect:—"That the apostles continued at Jerusalem for many years after the ascension of our Saviour, is manifest from their Acts which were written by St. Luke; nor can it be doubted that their stay there was in consequence of the Divine command. The reasons on which this Divine man-

* Burton's Lectures on Eccl. Hist., vol. i. p. 145.

date was founded, are, I think readily to be perceived. In order to establish the Christian commonwealth on a firm and durable basis, and to furnish the Churches which were about to be planted in the different nations of the earth with a model after which they might form themselves, it was requisite that the first Christian assemblies should be constituted and instructed with great care under the immediate eye of the apostles themselves."*

The primitive Church undoubtedly regarded this as part of the Divine economy of the Gospel. Clemens Alexandrinus,† in the second, and Eusebius‡ in the fourth, century, have recorded a prevailing tradition that the apostles had been directed by our Lord not to leave Jerusalem for twelve years; from which it is at

* Mosheim de rebus Christ. ant. Const. Sæc. i. §. 13, Note. Vol. i. p. 134. Vidal's translation.

† Stromata vi. 5.

‡ Eccl. Hist. v. 18.

least plain that the Church in general saw nothing either injurious to the Gentiles or inconsistent with Christ's commission, in this marked priority given to Jerusalem and to the Jews. To the Gentile world it proved a source of blessing in the provision which it made of qualified and devoted missionaries for the future spread of the Gospel, and of a living model of a Christian Church. And to the Jewish nation it manifested the faithfulness and long-suffering of God to his covenant people, it established the true order of the Divine dealings with Jew and Gentile, it attested the truth of Christianity which was to *begin at Jerusalem*, and it bore out the full truth of the early apostolical declaration, "*Unto you first*, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." *

* Acts iii. 26.

CHAPTER II.

PURITY AND DEVOTEDNESS OF THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

Character of the Primitive Church of Jerusalem a Model for all Ages.—Scriptural Testimony.—Surrender of Property and Community of Goods.—Opinions on this Subject.—The Result of a Divine Appointment.—Exact Conformity to our Lord's Commands.—Similar Commands not given in the Epistles.—The probable Purpose of God in this Peculiarity in the Church of Jerusalem.—Testimony of Hegesippus to the Purity of this Church in the commencement of the second Century.

It must ever be an object of deep interest to contemplate the character of the Church as it came originally from the hands of its inspired founders fresh from the sanctifying influences of the day of

Pentecost. We must contemplate that character in the history of the Church of Jerusalem as presented in the Acts of the Apostles, which represent that Church as peculiarly eminent for simplicity of faith, holiness of conduct, devotedness to the Saviour, and unity amongst the brethren. The Holy Ghost has recorded these distinguishing traits of its character as models for imitation to the Church Catholic in all subsequent times. In this respect the ancient "Church of the circumcision" stands out pre-eminent above all its successors. The first Christians are said to have "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and of prayers."* "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."† As yet no heresies had corrupted their faith, no schisms had broken their union, no worldly objects had perverted their affections. They were constant in

* Acts ii. 42. † Acts iv. 32.

their attendance on Divine ordinances, and especially frequent in the participation of the Lord's Supper; and thus learned to live a life of faith in the Son of God, who had loved them and given himself for them.

But there was one very remarkable feature in the history of the Church of Jerusalem which must not be passed over, as in this it differed from all the other primitive Churches, so far as we have any record. We read of the first converts at Jerusalem, that "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need."* And on another occasion that "neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought

* Acts ii. 44, 45.

the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."* The disposal of the common stock was thus, in the first instance, directed by the apostles. A slight interruption of Christian harmony took place between the Grecians, or foreign Jews, and the Hebrews, or natives of Judea, on the subject of the distribution to the widows of their respective communities; but this was soon happily composed by the wisdom of the apostles, who, on this occasion, ordained seven deacons, and appointed them to take charge of the necessary duty of attending to the wants of the poor. We do not find that any particular command was given to the Church of Jerusalem on this point; at the same time the practice was universal; it was carried out under apostolical authority; it has the express approbation of the

* Acts iv. 32, 34, 35.

Spirit of God, and is recorded in the New Testament with especial marks of honour. Some have thought that no such thing as an actual community of goods is alleged in Scripture to have existed amongst the first Christians. The late Dr. Burton, in his "Lectures upon the Ecclesiastical History of the first three Centuries," adopts the views of Mosheim on this subject, and says, "They looked upon their goods not as exclusively their own, but as a store from which something might be spared to succour those who were in need. Some of them did literally sell their property, not perhaps the whole of it (for that would have made themselves dependent in future upon public charity), but they converted a part of it into money, and made a common stock, which the apostles distributed to the poor."* This representation, however, scarcely seems to come up to the plain

* Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., vol. i. lect. ii. p. 55.

statement of the sacred text; nor is it lawful to explain away the clear testimony of holy Scripture to a remarkable fact on account of any unsound and erroneous conclusions which have been or may be drawn from it. We have no need to be alarmed by the sneer of the Infidel, or the fear of affording any plea for the worst abuses of the monastic system, or the wild extravagances of any subsequent heresy. "The question," says Dean Waddington,* "has been greatly controverted whether an absolute community of property ever subsisted in the Church. That it did so is a favourite opinion of some Roman Catholic writers, who would willingly discover in the first apostolical society the model of the monastic system; and the same to its utmost extent has been partly asserted and partly insinuated by Gibbon. The learned argument of Mosheim disposes us

* Waddington's Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 43.

to the contrary belief: and if the words of Scripture in one place should seem to prove that such community did actually exist among the original converts in the Church of Jerusalem, we are obliged to infer from other passages not only that it did not universally prevail as one law of the whole Church, but that it gained no favour or footing in the several Churches which were founded elsewhere." There is a disparaging tone in this passage with reference to the practice in question which we certainly do not discover in the Scripture narrative. That it was a peculiarity in the character of the Church of Jerusalem I admit; but it was one which invested that Church with peculiar interest. There is a sacredness in all its proceedings which we shall do well to contemplate with reverence, and a devotedness in its spirit which the present age is in little danger of imitating too closely.

The thirty-eighth Article of our Church declares, that "The riches and

goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast;" and Bishop Burnet rather quaintly remarks upon it, "There is no great difficulty in this Article, as there is no danger to be apprehended that the opinion condemned by it is like to spread. Those may be for it who find it for them. The poor may lay claim to it, but few of the rich will ever go into it." It was otherwise with the first Christians of Jerusalem. There was no claim made by the Church on any man's *right, title, or possession;* there was no clamour made by those that had nothing, for the estates and property of the rich; but there was a cheerful and entire surrender on the part of those that had lands, houses, or goods, of all that they possessed to the service of Christ and the general support of the Church. They could truly say, "Lo we have left all and followed thee."

Nor does it appear satisfactory to consider this extraordinary act of devotedness and brotherly love as an incidental manifestation of the influence of Christianity in its first powerful outbreak. It is too strongly marked as a peculiar and distinguishing feature of the "Church of Jerusalem," for us to avoid seeing the tokens of a Divine interposition and purpose. We find no trace of such a state of things in any other Church. In the epistles there is an evident recognition of the existence of different degrees of wealth amongst the Gentile Churches; nor does St. James, who addresses his epistles to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, lead us to suppose that amongst the Hebrew Christians of the Dispersion there was any approach to the primitive practice of their brethren at Jerusalem. "We cannot doubt that this was by Divine appointment. None were compelled to this measure, because none were compelled to unite themselves to this

society; but all that believed, consented to sell all that they had, that they might have treasure in heaven; and I think it appears from the awful visitation on Ananias and Sapphira, that it was a law of the society. It pleased God, perhaps, that this should be the particular trial of their faith 'who first trusted in Christ;' or it might have been intended as a provision for their mutual welfare, in the scenes of persecution, and of national distress in which this branch of the visible Church was soon to be involved; or have had further in view, with respect to those who should survive, or flee from, these troubles, the preparation of an army of missionaries, who should bear the banners of the cross from Jerusalem to the ends of the world." *

It must be acknowledged that in the New Testament history of this remarkable Church we have a plain and simple inter-

* Fry's Short Hist. of the Church of Christ, Part i., chap. i. p. 10.

pretation put upon many of our blessed Lord's precepts, which we find some difficulty in reconciling fully with the present general practice of the Church. Whilst these early Hebrew Christians of Jerusalem claimed the consolation of that promise, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," they literally complied with the requirement by which it is followed. "Sell that ye have, and give alms." * It has already been noticed that we find no counterpart of this command in the exhortations addressed to the Gentile Churches by the apostles, "not one of whom urges it as binding on the consciences of his Gentile converts, that they should devote all their property to almsgiving, nor more of it than in proportion to their means, and to the demands of their own necessities, and to the just claims of their families and im-

* Luke xii. 32, 33.

mediate connexions upon themselves." * It seems probable that some parts of our Lord's instructions to his immediate disciples had a special reference to them and the Church which they were to found in Jerusalem amongst "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," to whom alone He was sent. They were destined to occupy a conspicuous place, to stand in the forefront of the battle, to be the pattern of the Church, and to furnish the instruments of its establishment in the world.

Truly, "great grace was upon them all;" and if upon the assumed fact that special sacrifices and unexampled devotedness were required *from* them, whilst by faith they relied upon a special provision made *for* them, we are willing to exonerate ourselves from the obligations to which they voluntarily submitted, we must not forget that the sacrifice and the reward go together. The writer last quoted has entered very fully into this

* Greswell on the Parables, vol. iii. p. 270.

subject, in order to show that the discourse particularly addressed to the disciples (Luke xii. 22—48), has a special reference "to the believing Jews, in contradistinction as much to the believing Gentiles as to the unbelieving Jews; and considered as forming the congregation of the first Christian Church, the Hebrew Church, or mother Church of Jerusalem." *

The following extracts are forcibly illustrative of the devoted character and simple faith of that distinguished Church:—

"There never was until then, nor ever has been since, an instance of a society of Christians, living in the world, so principled as this; the condition of entering into which was the sacrifice of all a man before possessed, with the loss of his own exclusive right in it, and enjoyment of it, and the consequence of continuing to belong to which was the necessity of

* Greswell on the Parables, vol. iii. p. 247.

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* Greswell on the Parables, vol. iii. p. 247.

template the gracious designs of God in affording such a manifestation of the power of Divine grace in the believing remnant of his ancient and still beloved people.

There was mercy to themselves in this peculiar dispensation. They were members of a nation which was on the brink of political ruin; whose institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, were on the point of entire dissolution; whose city was marked for destruction. A total loss of all public and private property was just at hand. But that which had belonged to believers in Christ was thus saved from the general wreck, and having been sold of necessity to the unbelieving part of the nation, the loss was providentially transferred from believers to unbelievers, and a bountiful provision thereby made for the sustenance of a body of faithful disciples, and for the actual maintenance of the entire Church.

"Nor," says the above-mentioned

author, "is it surprising that the good pleasure of God should vouchsafe an especial mark of his favour in behalf of this little flock of his Son in particular, who, besides being the true spiritual seed of Abraham and of the fathers, were their true natural seed also; whose were the covenant, the promises, and the adoption; of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ himself came; who were for a time the only instance which the world had seen, or was intended to see, of the practical effects of Christian piety and devotion, Christian purity and holiness, Christian self-denial and disinterestedness, Christian charity and benevolence; the first, and as yet the sole, examples of Christian patience, Christian faith, Christian constancy and resignation; the first to bear the name of Christ, and to publish his glory to all the world, in the face of opposition, persecution, obloquy, and death; for a time the only light of the world, the only salt of the earth, and

always so among their own countrymen in particular; from whose bosom, too, in due time, went forth the feet of the messengers of the glad tidings of salvation to all the nations of mankind.

"Many blessed and most beneficial effects, it is obvious, might be the result of the existing state of things in the Hebrew Church, extraordinary as it was, not merely to the Christian Jews themselves, but the unbelieving also. Much there must have been in it, not only to attract the attention, but to raise the wonder, to deserve the admiration, to conciliate the good will even of these last, and to persuade them of the truth of a religion, so powerful in its practical influences, so beneficial in its tendencies to the temporal welfare and happiness of its professors, so singularly protected by Providence, so visibly favoured with the Divine blessing. There was no such thing as a poor person in the community;

and yet there was no such thing as a rich one! Nobody possessed anything, yet nobody wanted for anything! In what society but this Christian one, not actually detached from the world, not totally abstracted from the common duties of life, was such a phenomenon before or afterwards to be seen? There was no distinction of rank or privilege, no difference of means or fortune among the members of this community: all were peers in personal dignity; all had the same rights; all were alike partners in the ownership of property, and alike sharers in its use and enjoyment. What exemplary self-denial; what genuine humility on the part of the rich; what tenderness and indulgence to the poor; what peculiar honour and elevation bestowed on the latter, with no degradation or abasement on the part of the former; what mutual attachment, what sincere charity, what harmony and concord, did these things evince in all, or

tend to excite in all, one towards the other!"*

On the subject of the primitive purity of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem, for some time after the close of the sacred history, it is important to quote the testimony of Hegesippus,† a writer of the second century, as quoted by Eusebius. After relating the martyrdom of Symeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, about the year 104, he adds, that "until then the Church continued a pure and undefiled virgin; those who endeavoured to corrupt the sound rule of wholesome doctrine, if any such persons there were, concealing themselves hitherto in obscurity. But when the sacred company of the apostles was by various kinds of death become

* Greswell on the Parables, vol. iii. p. 261.

† Hegesippus was himself a Jewish convert, and wrote no great length of time after the dissolution of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem; but his works have been lost, with the exception of the extracts which have been made by other authors.

extinct, and the generation of those men was past who had been accounted worthy to hear with their own ears the Divine wisdom, then the conspiracy of impious error took its rise from the deceit of false teachers, who, inasmuch as not one of the apostles was then alive, did now at length impudently attempt to preach up the knowledge, falsely so called, in opposition to the doctrine of the truth."*

But although, on the testimony of the same writer, there arose "false Christs, false prophets, and false apostles, who rent asunder the unity of the Church by their corrupt opinions brought in against God and his Christ," and we must remember

* Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, lib. iii. chap. 32. Valesius, in his note on this passage, observes that Eusebius seems to have attributed to the whole Church that which Hegesippus wrote of the Church of Jerusalem in particular; and refers to another quotation (lib. iv. chap. 22), to show that the Church of Jerusalem alone was meant. But the whole of chap. 32. lib. iii. undoubtedly refers to the Church of Jerusalem.

that the Hebrew-Christians, from their relative position, both to the Jewish nation and the Christian Church, were singularly exposed to "perils from false brethren," yet we have no evidence that the "Church of the circumcision" had departed from the faith at the period when they lost their distinct character in the reign of Adrian. On the contrary, we have evidence that in the time of Jerome, so late as the fourth century, there were many individual remnants of that Church still in existence, maintaining the character originally given them by their first inspired bishop, believers in Christ, and yet zealous for the law.

But a further inquiry into this subject will be resumed in another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

To be collected from occasional Notices, not from positive Injunctions.—Examination of Acts xxi. 17—19.—St. Paul's Reception by St. James.—First Notice of St. James' Authority at Jerusalem, Acts xii. 17.—The President of the Council at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 13.—References to St. James in the Epistle to the Galatians.—Mosheim's Views of the Origin of Episcopacy at Jerusalem.—General Consent of the Church.—Evidence of the Existence of Presbyters.—Appointment of Deacons.—*Diocesan* Episcopacy established at Jerusalem.—Discipline and Order of the Church.

In considering the Scripture history of the original foundation of the Church of Jerusalem, we have traced its progress to

the period when St. James appears to have been decidedly recognised as the Bishop or superintending pastor of the whole body of believers. It must necessarily be an object of intense interest to inquire what Scriptural evidence we have respecting the ecclesiastical regulations and government of a Church founded by the twelve apostles as the very first official act performed in virtue of their Lord's commission, and so eminent, as we have seen, for piety, devotedness, and unity.

It ought scarcely to be needful to premise that in an inquiry into Church discipline and economy under the Gospel dispensation, we are not to look for the same stringent code of minute laws and regulations as were given under the dispensation of the law. The Church was then under "a schoolmaster;" * and is compared to a son and heir placed under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father. The whole

* Galatians iii. 24; iv. 2.

frame-work of the Mosaical institutions therefore partook of this character; every ordinance had a distinct penal sanction; the letter of the law must be exactly complied with, and a punishment was provided for every deviation from it. In opposition to this "letter which killeth," was the "Spirit that giveth life." Instead of a circumstantial code, the Gospel not only lays down a certain general principle, but provides for the infusion of that principle into the heart. That principle is the law of love. Being no more servants but sons, and having the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, the obedient children of the Gospel are prepared to receive the intimations of their heavenly Father's will, not from the denunciations of positive law, but from the gracious commands of a Father and the precious promises of a Saviour. Even in the external administration of his service, they do not make light of every ordinance which is not enforced by the

consuming fire and yawning gulf of Korah and his company, or trifle with sacred institutions because the infringement of them is not likely to be followed by the dreaded leprosy of Uzziah.

Example too is the great teacher amongst the disciples of Jesus Christ. "He hath set us an example that we should follow his steps." His inspired apostles also were instructed to teach by example, and strongly inculcated this on those to whom they preached.

The question thus becomes important —How did the Holy Ghost order and administer the first Church of Christ established upon earth? We find, indeed, certain leading arrangements common to the great body of the Church in all former ages, and now recognised and adopted by our own. Do we find the same in the Primitive Hebrew Church of Jerusalem? We do; and we may accommodate the declaration prefixed to our ordination services, and assert that it is

evident to every one who diligently studies the history of the Church of Jerusalem as related in the holy Scriptures, and continued by undoubted testimony of early writers, that there were ever a bishop, priests, and deacons in it. It seems impossible to read the account given in the twenty-first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles of the reception of St. Paul at Jerusalem, without perceiving what in ordinary history we should call an incidental, and therefore the more forcible description of the ecclesiastical polity of this Church. In sacred history, however, it must be borne in mind that there is nothing really incidental, but that this was the mode wisely chosen by the Holy Ghost for conveying to the Church positive instruction.

The sacred historian, who was evidently one of the company, thus relates the transaction:—"And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly; and the day following, Paul went

in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.* And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." † Is it possible to have a more distinct account of St. Paul's formal reception by the Bishop of Jerusalem and his clergy on his return from his apostolical labours? He had already on the day of his arrival been received by "the brethren," the individual members of the Church; and as they received him "gladly," he must no doubt have gladdened their hearts with the news of the spreading Gospel. But why such particular mention of his public introduction to James? James was evidently a person of distinction in the Church; but so was St. Paul, and in personal rank, in ministerial qualifications, and in the extent of his commission, "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." The

* "παντες τε παρεγενοντο οι πρεσβυτεροι."

† Acts xxi. 17—19.

solution is clear; on the day after his arrival St. Paul was publicly presented to the chief pastor or bishop* of the Church, who on so important an occasion was surrounded by the entire body of his clergy, who had evidently been summoned for that purpose, for "ALL the elders were present." And who these *elders* or presbyters were, we are at no loss to learn from other parts of the New Testament, if it were not plain from this very passage. They were of that order of pastors who were set apart for the ordinary ministry of the word, either by the apostles themselves, who "ordained them *elders* in every Church,"† or by a distinct order of pastors specially commissioned by the apostles, such as Titus, whom St.

* "If the name in its restricted sense be not so ancient as the period of which we are now treating, the outlines of Episcopal government, in individual churches, are certainly distinguishable 'in James and the presbytery.'"—"Fry's Short History of the Church," part i. chap. i. p. 18.

† Acts xiv. 23.

Paul left in Crete to set in order the things that were wanting, and to *ordain elders* in every city; or Timothy, whom the same apostle besought to abide at Ephesus with a charge to rule the Church there, and to commit the ministry of the word to "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." *

St. James had an authority and pre-eminence in the Church of Jerusalem, which, on the one hand, placed him above "the elders," and, on the other hand, was totally distinct from the apostleship. He did not preside by virtue of his apostleship; for, as it has been already shown, during the short period for which the apostles remained and presided at Jerusalem, they did so in their collective capacity; and if it were necessary that one of their number should preside, we should naturally expect that it would have been St. Peter, not in the character of "Bishop of Rome," as the

* 2 Tim. ii. 2.

Romanists pretend, but as the "apostle of the circumcision."

Immediately upon the necessary separation of the apostles we find a recognition of the authority of St. James at Jerusalem. It was evidently settled before the martyrdom of James, the brother of John; for this event was immediately followed up by the imprisonment of Peter, who, on his miraculous deliverance, gives this direction, as with reference to an arrangement decidedly recognised before he was taken to prison, "Go shew these things *unto James*, and to the brethren."*

On occasion of the remarkable assembly of the Church of Jerusalem to settle the question of the obligation of the Gentiles to keep the law of Moses, in which the apostles took part as such, and when St. Peter himself was present, and spoke, as well as St. Paul, the presidency of St. James is sufficiently manifest from the

* Acts xii. 17.

inspired narrative.* He summed up the opinions, and delivered the authoritative decision of the Church.

The manner in which the Apostle James is introduced is strongly marked. "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me." St. Chrysostom commences his homily on this passage thus: "This man was Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, and therefore he speaks last."† Indeed the mere presidency of St. James on this occasion is too evident to be questioned; and to my mind it appears equally clear that he could only have presided in the character of bishop of that Church. The presence of Peter on this occasion is of the utmost importance to the argument; for if we suppose that an apostle would preside over this assembly in his apostolical character

* Acts xv. 13, 19.

† Chrysostom, in Act. Apost., Hom. xxxiii. tom. ix. p. 253.

simply, we infer from all the previous history that this distinction belonged to Peter, and that he would have taken the lead, as he undoubtedly did on all former occasions when the apostles acted in their corporate capacity. Again, if we consider this august assembly as "the Church of the circumcision," who so likely to preside as the apostle who was so expressly designated by the Holy Ghost, and so decidedly recognized by the Church, as "the apostle of the circumcision?" Or it may further be asked, in reference to the presumptuous claims of the Romish Church, if James had been appointed to the bishopric of Jerusalem by the authority and act of Peter as the source of all Episcopal power and jurisdiction, would not Peter still have presided on this memorable occasion? Certainly the mere legates or representatives of his pretended successors would have claimed the right in any diocese whatsoever. On the whole, I see no other conclusion to

which we can come, but that James presided not by virtue of his apostleship only, but in the joint character of apostle, and bishop of the Church of Jerusalem. The peculiar character and formation of this extraordinary assembly will come under consideration in another chapter.

The references to Jerusalem in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians strengthen the conclusions to which we are unavoidably led by the passages just quoted from the Acts of the Apostles. On the general work of the apostolate St. Paul came to Jerusalem, at an early period after his conversion, expressly to see Peter, who had *opened* the door of faith to the Gentiles; and during the fifteen days of his stay saw none other of the apostles, except the one whom, judging from his subsequent conduct, we are prepared to expect that he would visit, namely, James, the Lord's brother, the Bishop of Jerusalem. When, fourteen

years after this, he visited Jerusalem with Barnabas, and conferred with the apostles on the general questions of their apostolical work, he mentions James, Cephas, and John, as seeming to be pillars, with whom it was finally agreed that himself and Barnabas should go unto the heathen. But when St. Paul afterwards met St. Peter at Antioch, and rebuked the dissimulation of his brother apostle, he mentions the arrival of brethren from the Church of Jerusalem by saying, that "certain came from James."

A connected view of these references to the language and narrative of Holy Scripture would of itself naturally leave the impression that James, the brother of our Lord, was the Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem; and when we know that such is the unanimous testimony of antiquity, and the general belief of the Church in all ages, we cannot but receive the New Testament evidence now adduced as a direct confirmation by the

Holy Ghost of the truth of this important fact.

Where Scripture is so clear, and the testimony of the Church so decisive, there seems little necessity for actual reference to the opinions of different writers who have treated on this subject. But the observations of Mosheim on this point are important as representing the views of himself and many others who cannot be supposed to have any prejudice in favour of Episcopacy. He says, "As the early Churches are well known to have taken all their institutions and regulations from the model exhibited to them by the Church of Jerusalem, it appears to me that scarcely a doubt can be entertained of their having been also indebted to this last-mentioned venerable assembly for the example of appointing some one man to preside over the presbyters, and general interest of each individual Church, and that the first instance of any one's being invested with the

Episcopal office, occurred in that city. This much at least is certain, that no Church whatever can be proved to have had a bishop prior to that of Jerusalem. All ancient authorities, from the second century downwards, concur in representing James the younger, the brother of our Lord after the flesh, as the first bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, having been so created by the apostles themselves." Against this force of evidence the learned author does not attempt to offer any argument so far as the facts are concerned, as he subsequently remarks, that "it appears, indeed, from the writings of the New Testament, that after the departure of the other apostles on their travels, the chief authority in the Church of Jerusalem was possessed by James." But he asserts that St. James governed the Church as an apostle and not as a bishop, though he acknowledges that he was followed by a succession of bishops, and most probably

without any long interval between the death of the apostle and the appointment of a bishop as his successor in the government of the Church. He considers it as "placed beyond dispute, that the Church of Jerusalem had over it a bishop long enough before the close of the first century after Christ; and this being established, it will scarcely, I had almost said, it cannot be denied that the Episcopal dignity must have originated in and passed to the other Churches from that of Jerusalem."*

Now, when we consider by whom St. James was followed in the Episcopal authority, and the high character which the Church of Jerusalem then maintained, it is evident that it had been taught to regard its constitution under the apostle, as a Divine model for future imitation. Nor can we suppose that such a general acquiescence on the part

* Mosheim, de rebus Christ. ant. Const. Sæc. i. §. 41, note. Vidal's trans. vol. i. p. 229—232.

of the whole Church in adopting the forms of Church polity laid down at Jerusalem could have happened, otherwise than under the conviction of its Divine original. There was much in that Church of a national and distinctive character which was not attractive to Gentile Churches; it possessed too little of worldly influence or external recommendation to hope to become the pattern of the Christian world from any inferior motives; it was nothing less than the spiritual presence of Christ himself, and the manifold tokens of the extraordinary guidance of his Holy Spirit which enabled that Church, in the midst of a distracted nation, and in the face of impending destruction, to stand forth as the model for Christendom, and to command the imitation of the Gentile Churches of that and all succeeding ages.

The existence of "elders," presbyters, or ordinary pastors in the Church of Jerusalem, has been already noticed.

We are not told when they were first appointed, though we have an early notice of their existence. This is in perfect conformity with the general tone of the New Testament dispensation. It is enough for us to know that they *were* appointed, and of this we have sufficient evidence. There is every reason to believe that their first appointment took place shortly after the establishment of the Church itself, which, from its original numbers, would at the earliest period require their ministrations. There is great probability in the opinion of Mosheim, who considers that in the history of the fearful end of Ananias and Sapphira, we have a very distinct intimation of their existence. Mention is there made of "the young men" who carried out these persons to their burial, and who are spoken of as persons on whom such a duty devolved in ordinary cases: they are called οι νεωτεροι and οι νεανισκοι,* im-

* Acts v. 6, 10.

plying that they were recognised officers of the Church of an inferior grade, and as such, distinguished from the "οι πρεσβυτεροι," or elders. The elders or presbyters are expressly mentioned as having authority in the Church, when the Christians of Antioch sent relief to the suffering Church of Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. It is said that they sent it to "the elders" (προς τους πρεσβυτερους),* to whom belonged the duty of superintending the distribution, although the deacons would be the agents in carrying it into effect.

The appointment of the order of deacons, is recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts; and though this title is not there assigned to them, yet their office is plainly described as having charge of the distribution of relief to the poor. That other subordinate officers had already been employed under the apostles, seems probable from the nature of the case, and

* Acts xi. 30.

from the fact that the Grecians, who were the dissatisfied party, murmured, not against the apostles, but against the Hebrews. The apostles declared that they could not consistently attend in person to the management of the daily distribution, but they immediately proceeded to set apart, by a solemn act of ordination, a distinct order of ministers to take special charge or superintendence of so needful a duty, with which the work of preaching the Gospel was evidently combined, as in the case of Stephen and Philip.

We have thus a most distinct Scripture testimony, that in the Church of Jerusalem, in its original and purest state, there were the three orders of bishop, presbyter or priest, and deacon. It is not alleged that the Word of God proves that these particular names or titles were severally and distinctly assigned to these three orders; but it does prove the existence or distinction of the orders them-

selves. There was a superior pastor, not occasionally or temporarily, but permanently presiding, and whom we now call a bishop; there were "elders" or presbyters dispensing the Word of Life under the chief pastor, and whom we now usually call "priests;" and there were other ministers specially ordained to take care of the poor, and who yet united ministerial labours with this charge, whom the Church has called deacons.*

But the history of the Church of Jerusalem is not only decisive on the question of Episcopacy as distinguished from Presbyterianism, the leading idea of which is the "parity of ministers," as it is called; it is equally decisive in

* Although this name does not occur in the account of their original appointment, yet it does occur in other parts of the New Testament; but it is not the object of these remarks to enter generally upon the New Testament evidence of a threefold ministry, but simply to collect together so much as may be drawn from the history of the Church of Jerusalem.

favour of diocesan Episcopacy, as distinguished from the Independent or Congregational form of Church government.

It has been attempted to define a primitive particular Church as "a company of believers, who at one time, at one and the same place, did associate themselves together, and concur in the participation of all the institutions and ordinances of Jesus Christ, with their proper pastors and ministers."* But we have already noticed that the Church of Jerusalem is spoken of as "the Church" —one Church, under one chief pastor, with many subordinate pastors. The members of this particular body had their assemblies for Christian worship and spiritual edification, and from their numbers, must have been formed into many separate congregations. No one room

* See King's Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the primitive Church, p. 3, §. 2, as quoted in Sclater's "Original Draught," &c.

could have accommodated the three thousand persons converted on the day of Pentecost, much less the many thousands added within a few weeks of that time. We have, therefore, from the very commencement of the Church, an instance of one bishop presiding over many congregations.

The following quotation from Sclater's "Original Draught of the Primitive Church," in answer to Lord Chancellor King's "Inquiry into the Constitution, &c., of the Primitive Church," puts this subject in a forcible light.* He says:—

"I wish our learned author had begun his proof of this, where the Church itself began, and had thought Jerusalem (the mother Church of all) as worthy of his notice as any of the rest, and Scripture evidence as fit to be considered, as other authorities he is pleased to use. But he has cautiously

* It has been stated that Sclater's work convinced his noble opponent of his error.

declined both one and t'other. For in his three first chapters, wherein the whole parochial scheme is finished, we find but one slight reference to Holy writ, and that of no importance to the case, nor any text so much as named at all; and amongst all the particular Churches he chose to treat of (which are pretty many), that of Jerusalem (which the whole college of apostles jointly founded, as it were, a model for the rest) is not so much as named. Was this for want of matter, can we think, suitable to the subject of his inquiry there? or rather, that the stream of evidence ran too strong against his whole hypothesis in them both? Is it so obvious to common sense as not to deserve a little notice and plainer explication of it (in his way), how the many thousands, from time to time, converted in Jerusalem alone, and the daily increase of them, should commodiously, or indeed possibly,

worship God in one and the same place together, since they neither had the capacious temple, to be sure, or any other place that should be too much taken notice of, to hold such a numerous, and indeed unconceivable assembly in? And yet St. James, the Bishop of this Church, himself, in a few years after, calls those thousands of converted Jews by the multiplied number of myriads of them. (Acts xxi. 20.)

"The inspired penmen, who relate all this, had little reason to record in sacred writ, or to amuse posterity with the number, method, or nature of the churches, oratories, or meeting-houses, call them what we please, wherein those multitudes of blessed converts held assemblies for the offices and mysteries of their new religion (though their breaking bread from house to house, the Churches mentioned in private and particular houses there,

are no imperfect intimations of it, whatever other interpretations may be forced upon them); but be that as it will, the matter of fact which they tell us commands our faith; and if common sense and reason can contract such numbers into a single congregation, all their other writings, I am afraid, will feel the dangerous effect of such an extraordinary sort of commenting upon them." *

* Sclater's "Original Draught," &c., chap. ii. p. 27. This work was published early in the last century, and seems to have been much read. The third edition is dated 1727. There is a similar work entitled, "A Defence of Diocesan Episcopacy," by Maurice, in reply to Clarkson's "Primitive Episcopacy." The imprimatur by the Bishop of London is dated 1690. Clarkson attempts to explain away the numbers of the Church of Jerusalem in order to bring them within the limits of one congregation. It is unnecessary to quote Maurice's reply (see p. 23, et seq.). It shows, however, the importance of the primitive Church of Jerusalem in the determination of the great questions of Church government and constitution.

On the whole, an attentive examination of the history of the "Church of Jerusalem," as given in the word of God, will afford to the humblest member of the Church of England, the most satisfactory evidence that the form of Church government, and the arrangement of the Christian ministry under which it his privilege to live, are in happy agreement with that primitive order which the Holy Ghost established, and which Christ himself was pleased so abundantly to bless.

In considering the constitution of the Church of Jerusalem, the general discipline and order of proceeding in religious worship seems also to claim some notice. They attended the temple worship, to which I shall have to refer in another chapter. But they also met for Christian worship in private houses,* where they

* κατ' οικον. Acts ii. 46, and v. 42. In the first instance translated "from house to house," with "at home," as a marginal reading. In the other, our translation has "in every house." In both

had probably stated places of assembly, and into which the persecuting Saul entered as the known resort of Christians in order to bring them before the Jewish tribunal. They are said to have adhered steadfastly to the doctrine of the apostles, and to the fellowship, and to breaking of bread, and to prayers.* This description seems to refer in great measure to their assembling together for religious purposes. In this view, we have, *first*, an exhortation or discourse for the edification of all present; *secondly*, "η κοινωνια," translated "fellowship" in our version. But in the passages in the New Testament in which this word occurs without any qualifying expression, it refers in a special matter to the distribution of the Church offerings amongst the poor as in Romans xv. 26, 2 Corinthians viii. 4, and Hebrews xiii. 16.

instances in contradistinction to "in the temple." —See Mosheim de Rebus, &c., sæc. 1. §. 37. Vidal's Translation, vol. i. p. 200.

* Acts ii. 42.

And the custom of presenting offerings publicly before the celebration of the Lord's Supper is undoubtedly of the highest antiquity and of general prevalence in the Church; so that we may conclude that it had its origin in the practice of the Church of Jerusalem. *Thirdly*, we have the "breaking of bread," or the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which was associated with a Christian repast, as we gather from comparing ver. 45. Had it been merely a social meal, it would scarcely have been enumerated here, and that too before "the prayers." That the breaking of bread was a religious ordinance celebrated in a private house, may also be inferred from its being mentioned in verse 45, in connexion with the constant attendance of the first Christians at the temple, which was certainly for religious worship, and also from Acts xx. 7, 11, where this same "breaking of bread" is mentioned in connexion with the first day of the week at Troas, and as

taking place after St. Paul's sermon. The social repast in connexion with the Lord's Supper seems to have been discontinued at a later period in the Gentile Churches at least, in consequence of the profane excesses to which it gave occasion amongst Heathen converts, who had been used to mix carnal indulgence with their sacred feasts, as we may gather from St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians.*

Fourthly, we have the prayers of the Church, by which their religious assemblies were at all times especially distinguished.†

* 1 Corinthians xi. 20—34.

† See Mosheim de Rebus Christ. ant. Const. Sæc. i. §. 37, where the learned author gives his reasons for taking this view. Some suppose that κοινωνια is to be taken in connexion with διδαχη, and others, with κλασει του αρτου, but the above construction seems the most natural.

CHAPTER IV.

NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

Importance of the Question.—The Church of Jerusalem strict in the Observance of the Law.—Countenanced by the Practice of the Apostles.—Temple Worship connected with Christian Ordinances.—The Gospel not foreign to Jewish Ordinances.—Miracle wrought by Peter and John when attending the Evening Sacrifice.—Early Scruples in admitting Gentiles without Circumcision.—St. Peter's Dissimulation at Antioch, rebuked by St. Paul.—St. Paul's Conformity at Jerusalem.—Judaizing Doctrines in Gentile Churches.—The approaching Destruction of Jerusalem fully known to the Church.—National Character in harmony with the Divine Purposes.—Its Continuance until the Dissolution of the Church.

THERE is one point which must of necessity be continually referred to in the

course of an examination of the character and proceedings of the early Church of Jerusalem, and which demands a separate notice and careful investigation. I allude to the acknowledged fact that this Church maintained its national distinctions unimpaired, and that all its members, lay and clerical, were strict observers of the law of Moses. A decided recognition of this remarkable feature in the pure Christianity of the Pentecostal Church is essentially necessary to a satisfactory appreciation of its real position and character. If the national observances and attachment to the Mosaical institutions which were so strongly marked in the history of the first Christians, were a blemish in their character as a Church, if we are to look back upon their zeal for the law of which their apostolical bishop testified, and satisfy ourselves with the reflection that theirs were, in a measure, times of ignorance, which God winked at; the conclusion, after all, must be peculiarly dis-

tressing to a serious and reflecting mind, and painfully at variance with the estimate which Scripture itself has taught us to form of the purity and simplicity of those early times, when the multitude of believers "were of one heart, and of one soul," and "great grace was upon them all."* It must be borne in mind that Holy Scripture gives us a highly favourable description of this Church; that the same Holy Spirit which has attested its faith, its devotedness, its unity in Christ, its love for the brethren, its zeal for the Gospel, has likewise particularly recorded its continued and inflexible adhesion to the law of Moses and the national institutions of the Jews, without affixing one single note of disapprobation. Besides this, we cannot come to a decision which imputes to the Hebrew converts of Jerusalem a perilous degree of ignorance, prejudice, and an unenlightened conscience, without in-

* Acts iv. 32, 33.

volving the inspired apostles of our Lord in this heavy charge. We cannot disapprove of St. Peter's general conduct, who on one occasion was certainly to be blamed, without at the same time more decidedly condemning what we must in this case consider the compromising submission of St. Paul, the great champion of Gentile liberty, when he unhesitatingly complied with the requisition of the Church of Jerusalem, that he should by an immediate public performance of certain Jewish rites give a practical denial of the calumny which charged him with teaching the Jews of the Dispersion * to forsake Moses. We cannot class the Mosaical compliances of the later period of the inspired history of the Hebrew Church amongst the infirmities of good

* Even St. Paul was not suspected of such views with reference to the "Hebrews," or Jews of Judea, but only with reference to the "Grecians," the Hellenistic Jews, or Jews of the Dispersion; and yet he does not hesitate to contradict this charge by a solemn religious act.

men, without regarding under the same aspect the apostles and converts of the Pentecostal week, fresh from the converting and elevating influence of the Holy Ghost on that wondrous day, who "*continuing daily with one accord in the temple*, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."* Thus Christianity seems not only to have brought them into the closest bonds of Christian fellowship and worship, but also to have quickened and enlivened their attendance upon the Jewish temple worship; and the inspired writer refers to both these circumstances with equal marks of Divine approbation.

And perhaps it is impossible to select a stronger case than this which arises out of the very first account we have of the character and conduct of those "who first trusted in Christ." It seems as if

* Acts ii. 46, 47.

this account were given us expressly to prove that there was no necessary inconsistency in the purest profession of the Christian faith and in the most steadfast adherence to the national institutions of the Jews. We might indeed ask as a preliminary question, Why should we anticipate such inconsistency? Our Lord declared "Salvation is of the Jews." St. Paul attests that theirs are the promises. The Gospel was their peculiar birthright; it was the covenant of Abraham, and to them *first*, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless them in turning away every one of them from their iniquities.* We can allege no antecedent reason why Christianity should be unfitted to the national covenant and institutions of the Jewish people.

But let us return to the first inspired testimony, to the character and conduct of the first Christians. It is remarked by Mr. Fry, in his "Short History of

* Acts iii. 26.

the Church of Christ," "The conduct, however, of the Christians of Jerusalem, towards the religious institutions of their country, is carefully to be remarked. Not only they were not taught to do outrage to the feelings of their unenlightened neighbours, but as far as possible they conformed to all their established rites and usages. Destitute of spirit and of truth, as the temple service had now become, and degraded and depraved, as the general character of its appointed ministers was known to be, we find them 'continuing daily with one accord in the temple;' and they appear on all occasions to have waited their expulsion from the synagogue, as a suffering they must endure for their Master's sake, rather than as what they were to assert as their Gospel liberty. The ordinances of the Jewish Church were plainly not sufficient to feed the flame of their newly-kindled devotion; therefore, having Divine authority for the measure, they had their

own proper assemblies for the solemnities of the Christian worship, and for their spiritual edification."* The Word of God plainly tells us that they all frequented the temple worship, and that they also assembled together for the celebration of Christian ordinances. They were not therefore incompatible. And yet the attendance on the temple service involved a far greater apparent difficulty than the observance of circumcision or anything else. We have an illustration of this in the narrative of the miracle performed by Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. They were going up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, which is the ninth hour.† It was precisely the same time which Elijah chose for the trial of the great question between himself and the priests of Baal. It was "the time of the offering of the

* Fry's "Short History of the Church of Christ," part i. chap. i. pp. 9, 10.

† Acts iii. 1.

evening sacrifice."* The original appointment was, "Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even."† This was the prescribed daily morning and evening service of the temple, the times appointed were called the hours of prayer; and on such occasions the first Christians with the apostles, under the special influence of that Spirit who was to guide them into all truth, regularly presented themselves in the temple of the Lord. They assisted therefore at the daily offering up of the Levitical sacrifice of the lamb, typical of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Now if any Jewish rite was unsuitable for Christian attendance, surely this was particularly so; inasmuch as the great

* 1 Kings xviii. 29.

† Exodus xxix. 38, 39. See also Numbers xxviii. 3—8.

sacrifice had been offered, and accepted, to which these legal sacrifices were intended to direct the eye of faith. Yet we have it on the unquestionable authority of Holy Scripture that the knowledge of Christ, and a penitent, believing reliance on his sacrifice and atonement for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, tended to confirm the first Jewish Christians in their attendance on this typical ordinance, which to them henceforth became not typical of the future, but commemorative of the past. There was neither contradiction nor inconsistency in their conduct; and it is remarkable that the Holy Ghost chose and marked the particular occasion of the two apostles' attendance on the evening sacrifice by a special miracle in attestation of the power of Jesus Christ and the truth of the Gospel. Thus far, therefore, we find nothing in the observance of Jewish ordinances, and even of sacrifices, the most characteristic of all

others of the legal dispensation, which was inconsistent with the doctrine of justification by faith or derogatory to the free grace of the Gospel. The observance of circumcision was so strictly national in its character and Abrahamic in its origin, as to occasion far less apparent difficulty than the temple service.

It is important, however, to show that the early difficulties of the Church on the subject of circumcision do not imply any departure from the simplicity of the Gospel on the part of the early Hebrew-Christians. It is evident that, before the complete development of the Gospel system, conscientious difficulties were entertained first by the apostles, and for a longer period by members of the Church of Jerusalem, on the propriety of admitting Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel without a contemporaneous submission to the rites of the Jewish covenant, and especially to that of circumcision, which was Abrahamic as well

as Mosaical. But it does not follow that they were therefore deficient in clear views of the way of eternal salvation by Christ alone. Hitherto they knew Christ only as promised to the Jews, and if to the Gentiles, only through the Jews. Before the great mystery, as St. Paul calls it, had been fully made known, it was not unnatural that they should suppose that it was necessary that the Gentile converts should be graffed into the body of the Jewish Church. They were right as to the great purpose of God,* though as yet unenlightened as to the mode in which it was to be accomplished. Besides this, the actual state of Heathenism seemed inconsistent with the profession of Christianity. The very private life of Gentiles, to say nothing of their so-called religious mysteries, was interwoven with abominable and licentious practices. No wonder that it seemed needful to pious Jews that Christians should cease to be

* See Rom. xi. 17.

Gentiles. The question was determined by the Church of Jerusalem as the mother Church of Christendom, and the mistake, natural as it was in the first instance, was shown to be subversive of the faith of Gentile Churches. But St. Peter, in his address on this occasion, most decidedly, though by implication, asserts his own adherence, as well as that of the Jewish Christians in general, to the law of Moses when he says, "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they," * —intimating that although he and his brethren, in conformity with the national covenant, kept the law, yet their only hope of salvation was as much dependent on the free grace and mercy of Christ as that of the Gentiles. If, after this decision, we find instances of attempts to pervert the minds of Gentile Christians, by Jewish Christians, as in the case of the Galatian Church, we know that the

* Acts xv. 11.

Church was never exempt from false brethren, and can only refer them to the words of St. John, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."*

But even St. Paul, in that indignant rebuke which he did not hesitate to address to St. Peter, as recorded in the Epistle to the Galatians, remarkably confirms the view just taken when he says, "*We who are Jews by nature*, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, *even we* have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law."† The conduct of St. Peter on this occasion was such as to deserve the rebuke of his brother apostle. He had

* 1 John ii. 19. † Gal. ii. 15, 16.

been living on terms of social intercourse with certain Gentile Christians, and had partaken of food with them, which no Mosaical institution prevented his doing. But when certain members of the Church of Jerusalem arrived, he withdrew from his Gentile friends, "fearing them which were of the circumcision." It appears that other Christian Jews, and Barnabas amongst the number, were betrayed into the same dissimulation; and we may infer that the Christian Jews of Jerusalem were more exclusive in their intercourse than others, for this very natural reason, that few if any Gentiles were known to their Church, and that from the circumstances of Jerusalem, under Roman authority, the Heathen would be peculiarly obnoxious to its inhabitants in general. But there is no reason to suppose that any defective views of the Gospel were involved in their prejudices, which a more upright demeanour on the part of St. Peter might entirely have

removed. St. Paul was not only grieved at this want of Christian simplicity, but apprehensive of its influence on the Gentile converts, lest they should be induced to adopt the institutions of the law, which in their case, having no national bearing, could only be done with reference to eternal salvation.

St. Paul's last recorded visit to Jerusalem, which has been already alluded to, affords another decided proof of the steadfast adhesion of the Church there to the law of Moses, in the testimony of St. James himself to the fact that the myriads of believers were all zealous for the law. We may claim the testimony of the apostle of the Gentiles, that there was nothing in this state of things subversive of the faith of the Gospel. Where the interests of truth were concerned, this apostle gave place to none by subjection; no, not for an hour. Yet at Jerusalem, on this occasion, he willingly exhibited his Jewish conformity, by engaging in an

extraordinary service, which, though not uncommon, was yet not binding upon any particular person.

On the whole, we do not find that the Apostle Paul on any occasion condemned the strict Mosaism of the Church of Jerusalem, or apprehended that her Christian simplicity was endangered by her national character. His Epistle to the Hebrews was certainly not specially directed against any unsoundness in the view of salvation by faith, and not by the deeds of the law. For a bold exposition of this doctrine, we must turn to the Epistles addressed to the Gentile Churches of Rome and Galatia. We may make the same remark on St. James's epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. It indicates no fear of what have been called "legal views," to which we might have supposed the Hebrew Christians liable; but on the contrary, combats the opposite error so

strongly as to have been hastily* pronounced spurious by the reformer Luther, on account of supposed discrepancy with the doctrine of St. Paul to the Romans.

It has been well remarked, "that it is very important, in order to understand the history of these times, to distinguish between this heresy in the Churches of Galatia, and that zeal for the law which animated the Church at Jerusalem, and generally them of the circumcision throughout the world. What the latter contended for was, that, as belonging to the nation of the Jews, they were bound to observe all the laws and ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, as David and the prophets had done; and for this they would plead the example of our Lord himself in the days of his flesh, and the present practice of all the apostles." . . . "The Galatian heretics, indeed, adopted

* He subsequently retracted his opinion and acknowledged his error.

the very same ceremonies and customs as the Hebrew Christians, but on a very different principle. To judge of the fundamental difference, we have only to compare the different conduct of the apostle on the two occasions. To conciliate the latter, as being in a harmless error* at the most, he complies with the same customs and ceremonies, and causes Timothy, though a Gentile, to be circumcised. But respecting the former he protests, 'I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,'"† &c. &c.

* We have no authority from the Word of God for calling it an error at all. With reference to Timothy, he was of Jewish descent, by his mother's side, and having been educated by two pious Jewesses, his mother and his grandmother, being from his childhood conversant with the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, and we may reasonably conclude accustomed to the worship of the Jewish synagogue, it seems a very natural course that he should be numbered amongst the Christians of the circumcision.

† Fry's Short History of the Church, part i. ch. i. pp. 15, 16.

Nor was it in ignorance or doubt of the doom which was impending over Jerusalem that the Church of that city maintained their adherence to their national institutions, and thus testified their belief in the national promises. Our blessed Lord had given the fullest intimations of the approaching destruction, and the first Christians were prepared for the event, and at the proper season withdrew from the devoted city in conformity with the Divine warning which had been given them. Their conduct therefore was not prompted by the blind hope of seeing their country at once freed from its Heathen oppressors, and of attaining to honour and dignity in a kingdom shortly to be set up there by their Divine Master. It rather manifested the faith of their patriarchal progenitors, who hoped against hope, and their Scriptural conviction that the present national unbelief would not make the faith of God of none effect. The accusation of Stephen affords

important evidence on this point. The Gospel had, up to that period, been popular with the multitude, who were able to judge for themselves how far the new doctrine impugned their national religion or undermined their national hopes. They evidently felt that it attacked neither the one nor the other. But it was the policy of Stephen's accusers to represent him as an enemy to both; and accordingly they founded a charge of disaffection to their religion, their laws, and their temple, (which was evidently false,) upon his alleged declaration of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, which we have reason to believe was true. The apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, like their Divine Master, failed not to warn the unbelieving Jews of the coming judgment. The prediction that not one stone of the temple should be left upon another was deeply engraven on their minds; the destruction of Jerusalem, and its utter prostration under Gentile

oppression, was continually before their eyes as a certain event; nor were they ignorant of the peculiar trials destined for themselves; and therefore they were actuated by no vain and carnal motives, in thus steadfastly maintaining the national character of their Church.

It is thus evident from the Holy Scriptures that the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem maintained, without compromise, her national character, and zealously adhered to the law of Moses without impairing thereby the simplicity of her faith, or purity of her doctrine as Christian. We are led to the inevitable conclusion that the Hebrew aspect of this Church, which the Spirit of God has been so careful to delineate, was an essential part of the great plan of mercy made known in the Gospel. It was a necessary illustration of that inspired assertion of St. Paul, " that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises

made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."* It harmonizes exactly with the striking figure used by the same apostle when he teaches us that the Jewish Church was the parent stock of the good olive-tree, into which, as branches of a wild olive-tree, Gentiles are graffed, in order that they may partake of its root and fatness. It appears, therefore, a necessary part of the Divine economy of grace that the primitive Church of Jerusalem should be as visibly Jewish as it was decidedly Christian. If the first Christians had, immediately on their conversion, divested themselves of all national distinctions, and had thrown off their allegiance to Moses as the best evidence of their fidelity to Christ, they would have stamped upon Christianity an origin and a character decidedly Gentile; and the Apostle Paul must have reversed his

* Rom. xv. 8, 9.

application of the figure of the natural and the wild olive-tree. We conclude, therefore, on scriptural grounds, that it was not under the influence of a defective understanding of the Christian system, of a weak faith, or even of an excusable prejudice, but in accordance with the mind of the Spirit and in attestation of the faithfulness of God, that the "Church of Jerusalem" was the "Church of the circumcision," "zealous for the law."

From the period when the sacred history closes, our materials for forming an opinion of the state and character of the Church of Jerusalem became more scanty and, of course, less authentic. That it maintained its Jewish peculiarities until its extinction under Adrian, is admitted on all hands.

It will be necessary to recur to this subject again in endeavouring to trace the closing history of the Church of Jerusalem. At present it is important to refer to the brief, but decisive testimony

of Sulpicius Severus, a Christian historian who wrote about the year 400, to the Christian orthodoxy and strict nationality of that Church when its dissolution took place, one hundred years after its original formation, on the day of Pentecost. We learn from this writer, that the Christians in Judea were, for the most part, looked upon as Jews by the Romans; and that when Adrian had prohibited all Jews from approaching his new city, Ælia, on the site of ancient Jerusalem, the Hebrew-Christians found themselves excluded on account of their national conformity; that at that time almost all who professed faith in Christ as God retained the observance of the law; and that no person held any ministerial office in the Church of Jerusalem who was not of the circumcision.*

* Sulpicius Severus, Hist. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. xxxi.

CHAPTER V.

PRECEDENCE AND AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

Peculiarity of its Position.—Deference and respect paid to it by all other Churches—and even by the Apostles.—Remarkable Authority exercised by the Church of Jerusalem.—Authoritative Decision respecting Gentile Churches, Acts xv.—Claim on the Bounty of other Churches.—Memory of the Church of St. James long held in Veneration.—Cyril of Jerusalem.—Decisions of General Councils in Reference to it.—Supremacy of the Church of Jerusalem suspended, not transferred.—When to be Restored.—Bishop Horsley's Views of the Re-establishment of the Church of Jerusalem as the Metropolitan Church of the World.

It is impossible to pay much attention to the Scripture account of this remarkable Church without observing the pecu-

liarity of its position with reference to all other Churches. After alluding to its decline and final dissolution as "the Church of the circumcision," under the Emperor Adrian, a modern ecclesiastical historian remarks:—"Yet it would appear from Scripture that some sort of authority was at first exercised by the mother Church over her Gentile children; and that the decrees ordained by the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem, found obedience even among distant converts."* It is important to examine this question more thoroughly.

An extraordinary degree of respect and deference appears to have been paid by all other Churches to the Church of Jerusalem.

There is something remarkable in the manner in which St. Peter, notwithstanding his own apostolical authority, formally vindicated before the Church

* Waddington's History of the Church, vol. i. c. i. p. 3.

of Jerusalem his own proceedings with reference to his mission to the family of Cornelius. "When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they of the circumcision contended with him." * They did not yet fully understand the purposes of God to the Gentiles, or recognise their interest in the general commission to the apostles. But when Peter had "rehearsed the matter from the beginning," they joyfully acquiesced in the extension of the Gospel, and "glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Ever after this, the Church of Jerusalem seem to have taken the newly-formed Churches of the Gentiles under their fostering care, and to have manifested the deepest interest in their growing welfare. This evidence of Christian love on the part of the mother Church, appears to have been met by a corresponding feeling of deference and respect on the part of her

* Acts xi. 2.

spiritual children among the Gentiles; and the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel took not unfrequent opportunities of laying before the assembled Church of the circumcision, their gladdening recitals of new Churches formed and new conquests gained over Heathenism and idolatry. When the news was brought to Jerusalem of an accession of Jewish converts at Antioch, the Church sent Barnabas to exhort and confirm them; and it was from this newly-formed Church of *Jews of the Dispersion* that Paul and Barnabas were by special command of the Holy Ghost sent on their more extended mission to Jews and Gentiles.* St. Paul's own reference to his visits to Jerusalem, and especially the account given of his arrival there in the twenty-first chapter of the Acts, of his

* Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, has evidently a scriptural claim to be considered a second mother Church to the Gentiles. (Acts xiii. 1, 2, compared with xiv. 27.

introduction to the Church as already alluded to, and of his ready submission to the requirements then made of him, are striking evidence of the respect which that great apostle thought it not inconsistent to render to the opinions and judgment of the primitive Hebrew Church. The question whether St. James, the brother of our Lord, and Bishop of Jerusalem, was the same person as St. James the Apostle, will be considered hereafter; but whichever opinion we adopt, the pre-eminence and authority of the Church of Jerusalem are remarkably established.

If he were one of the twelve apostles, which there seems little reason to doubt, the precedence yielded to him by the apostles, especially in the discussion upon the great Gentile question, which did not concern his own particular diocese, marks the pre-eminence of the Church over which he presided. If he were *not* one of the twelve, the argument is still

stronger; for, as a Bishop, he was subordinate to the extraordinary authority of an apostle, and still more of an apostolical synod. The language and demeanour of St. Paul to the Bishops of Ephesus and Crete, stands in striking contrast to his intercourse with the Bishop of Jerusalem.

The statement of Eusebius,* of the election of the successor of St. James, written at a period when there was no temptation to exalt the primitive Church of Jerusalem, and no tendency unduly to honour the memory of a Hebrew episcopate, shows that nearly 200 years after its extinction there was a strong traditional sense of its pre-eminence and distinction. He mentions that it was reported "that the apostles and disciples of our Lord who were yet alive, met together from all parts in the same place, together also with the kinsmen of our Lord according to the flesh," in order to appoint a worthy successor in this see.

* Eusebius Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 11.

But the *authority actually exercised* by the Church of Jerusalem is perhaps one of the most remarkable circumstances connected with its history. No general council ever gave the law so decidedly to the great body of the catholic Church, as did the Synod of Jerusalem; no decision was ever considered so universally binding as its decrees. We are accustomed to consider the account of that august assembly whose deliberations are recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, as of the highest importance in its results, and as settling for ever a question of vital interest to the whole Gentile Christian world, from the days of the apostles to the end of time. But, by whom was this great question settled thus authoritatively? Not by the college of apostles, with whom alone we should naturally have expected such a decision to have rested. Not by a general council of the Church, consisting of delegated bishops or other members of the Churches, most deeply

and personally interested in the decision, associated with the Church of Jerusalem under the presidency of inspired apostles. And yet if the apostles were not to judge by their own authority, and any room were to be allowed for discussion, it would have seemed a reasonable course to give equal weight to both parties in this question, and to constitute a joint assembly of Hebrew and Gentile Christians. Yet this was not the case. A matter in which the comfort, the religion, and the conscience of Gentiles only were practically concerned, was decided by Jews only. The Church of Jerusalem by its sole decision settled the greatest question of doctrine and practice that ever agitated the Christian world.

It was at Antioch that the question was raised by certain that came from Judea who taught the Gentile brethren, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

The purity of the Church of Jerusalem

consisted not in an absolute freedom from the rise of error, but in the promptitude with which such error was corrected by the voice of the Church. Nor was the error itself of that malignant character as it regarded its originators which in these days we might be led to suppose. It was not so much an opposition to the Gospel doctrine of salvation by grace, as it was ignorance of God's wonderful mercy to the Gentiles, which as yet had only begun to be developed. These Hebrew Christians had hitherto seen the promises of God confined within the pale of the Jewish Church and people, and St. Paul himself speaks of their extension beyond that limit as a mystery which "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men."* They could not therefore imagine "a people of God," who were not in some way or other brought within the Jewish fold. We cannot wonder that those difficulties which at

* Ephesians iii. 5.

first staggered the apostles themselves, should afterwards produce more than hesitation in the minds of many Hebrew Christians. But, however natural the difficulty, and however excusable the mistake in the first instance, the consequences might have been fatal to the Gentile Churches, and, as in the case of the Galatian Church, utterly subversive of the faith of the Gospel. Hence the necessity for an immediate check; and accordingly, after much discussion and disputation, it was agreed "that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." * We cannot but bear in mind all St. Paul's assertions respecting his own apostolical authority; yet he does not use it here. He appeals not to the apostles, but to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, in other words to the Church of Jerusalem. On the arrival of this extraordinary deputa-

* Acts xv. 2.

tion, they are "*received of the Church*, and of the apostles and elders."* Subsequently "the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter."† There is no mention of Paul and Barnabas taking part, Hebrews as they were. They appeared as the representatives and advocates of the Gentile Church, and were heard at the bar of this distinguished assembly.‡ This was no general council, nor has the Church ever accounted it as such. The two great scriptural divisions of Christ's Church, Jews and Gentiles, have never yet been permitted to meet in council, or to deliberate on equal terms. Whilst the Jewish Christian Church of Jerusalem existed in its primitive purity, it was cheerfully looked up to as the sole judge of controversy, the guardian of the truth, and the final authority in the Church; and whilst that honoured Church scrupled not to exercise its acknowledged prerogative, the Holy Ghost was pleased

* Acts xv. 4. † Ib. xv. 6. ‡ Ib. xv. 12.

to stamp his Divine confirmation upon their decision.

The authority of the Church in this matter is marked throughout by the word of God. James, their bishop, had delivered his final sentence, and upon that sentence a decree was to be framed, and a synodical letter was to be written. And even in the despatch of these, we observe how carefully the authority of the mother Church is vindicated. It was not enough to send back the messengers of the Gentile Churches with the report of the decision; they send distinguished members of their own body. "Then pleased it the apostles *and elders, with the whole Church,* to send chosen men *of their own company* with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren." * The letters of which they were the bearers, were in the

* Acts xv. 22.

name of the "apostles, and elders, and brethren," addressed to "the brethren which are of the Gentiles," in the style of legitimate authority, disowning the erroneous doctrine which had been the cause of the appeal, and laying down their decision as that which "seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." On the part of the Gentiles we find the most thankful and submissive acceptance of this decision as conclusive of the question. It was formally delivered first to the Church of Antioch, which then stood forth as the representative and leading member of the Gentile Christian Church. It was subsequently delivered with equal authority to the other Gentile Churches in succession by St. Paul and his fellow labourers, of whom the sacred history relates that "as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, *that were ordained of the Apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem;* and so were the Churches

established in the faith, and increased in number daily."*

But a further peculiarity yet remains to be pointed out, and that is, *the acknowledged claim of the Church of Jerusalem on the general bounty of the Gentile Churches.* In the Epistle to the Galatians, we find St. Paul referring to his conference with three of the apostles which ended in their perfect acquiescence in the devotion of his own particular services, in conjunction with Barnabas, to the cause of Gentile conversion. But they made one proviso, to which he most readily assented. "Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."† Did the three apostles entertain so low an opinion of the charity and practical religion of St. Paul, as to think it necessary to stipulate that in his missionary labours amongst the Heathen, he should have some bowels of compassion for the

* Acts xvi. 4, 5. † Galatians ii. 10.

poor, whom he might meet with amongst them? Far from it. Their reservation was a special one, and was intended to provide that when he was labouring successfully among the Gentiles and extending the Gospel through far distant countries, he should not forget *the claims of the poor saints at Jerusalem*, claims which the apostle assured them that he would not, and which his history assures us that he did not neglect. Accordingly, we find throughout the sacred history of the extension of the Church among the Gentiles, a constant recognition of the catholic obligation of ministering to the necessities of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem. There was no question then introduced of the relative numbers of Hebrew and Gentile Christians, or of the claims of the Gentile poor as numerically greater, which they undoubtedly were, than those of the Jewish poor. It was acknowledged as the universal duty of the Gentile Churches to contribute to the

relief and support of the poor Hebrew converts at Jerusalem. "And," says St. Paul to the Romans,* "Their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things." He proposes it as a fit object of the prayers of the Roman Church, "that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints." †

We read of two particular instances in which special collections were made for the poor saints at Jerusalem. On the first occasion, Agabus, one of the prophets, who came from Jerusalem to Antioch, predicted a great dearth *throughout all the world;* and on this, it was the immediate determination of the Church at Antioch, to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea. Barnabas and Saul were the willing bearers of their bounty. It was for the same purpose ‡

* Romans xv. 27. † Ib. xv. 31.
‡ Acts xxiv. 17.

that St. Paul visited Jerusalem at a subsequent period of his labours, when he was assailed by the unbelieving Jews, and apprehended by the Roman authorities. It was to this latter contribution that he so earnestly refers in his Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, particularly mentioning the contributions of the Churches of Galatia, Achaia, and Macedonia, and leading us to infer that these were but a part; for he declares to the Church of Corinth, your zeal hath provoked "very many." In these passages he speaks of the contributions which he was raising, in general terms, as "ministering to the saints," by which expression he intended particularly the Hebrew saints of Jerusalem, as his own declarations show.* This obligation was not only urged by the apostle, but seems to have been deeply felt by the Gentile Churches, as a natural evidence of their sense of the love and grace of our Lord

* See Rom. xv. 25, 26. 1 Cor. xv. 1, 3 2 Cor. ix. 1.

Jesus Christ, which led them to urge the apostle with much intreaty to "receive the gift, and take upon" him "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."*

The memory of *this ancient Church was held in high veneration* long after it had ceased to exist in its original character. Hitherto we have had the testimony of the Word of God to the great respect and affection with which the Church of Jerusalem was regarded by the various Churches which the apostles had gathered, and which looked up to it as their common parent. We find that not only immediately after the close of the sacred history, but many years after the dissolution of the original Hebrew Church, its memory was held in honour by the Church; and more especially that the Gentile Church of Jerusalem, which was founded upon its ruins, claimed a portion of the respect due to so distinguished an

* 2 Cor. viii. 4.

origin. The Gentile bishops of Ælia, and of Jerusalem when the ancient appellation was restored under a Christian emperor, delighted to trace their descent from St. James and his Hebrew successors, and eagerly claimed the honour of filling the chair which he had occupied. The celebrated Cyril of Jerusalem, who was bishop there in the fourth century, and who preached his catechetical lectures, which are still extant, in Churches erected near the spot where the Redeemer suffered and died, evidently takes every opportunity of identifying the Church over which he presided, with the primitive Church of St. James. On one occasion, when laying down the Scripture rule respecting things offered to idols, he says, "Concerning these meats, not I only, but the apostles also before now, and *James the bishop of this Church*, have taken thought."* And again, discoursing upon

* Cyril's Lect. iv. p. 28. (Oxford Translation, p. 46.)

the resurrection, and the abundant evidences of it, he says, "*Then he was seen of James*, his own brother, and first bishop of this diocese. Seeing then that such a bishop originally saw Jesus Christ when risen, do not thou his disciple disbelieve him."*

The Gentile Church of Jerusalem did not possess the jurisdiction and authority which had evidently been exercised by its Hebrew predecessor. It became a general rule of the Church that the metropolitan authority should follow the arrangements of civil jurisdiction. On this principle, Rome and Constantinople acquired their pre-eminence, though the Roman Church too soon manifested a disposition to disown

* Cyril's Lect. xiv. p. 21. (Oxford Translation, p. 177.) The testimony of St. Paul to the resurrection is here powerfully stated by Cyril. He continues, "But thou sayest, that his brother James was a partial witness; *then he was seen also of me*, Paul, his foe; but what testimony is doubted when an enemy proclaims it? I, once the persecutor, now preach the glad tidings of the resurrection."

the real source of her early influence, and to set up a higher and an unauthorized claim. On the same ground the bishopric of Jerusalem became subordinate to the metropolitan Church of Cesarea. But the former dignity of this see was not soon forgotten by the Church; and accordingly, at the first general Council of Nice, in the year 325, a special reservation was made of the honour and dignity of the bishop of Ælia, in conformity with what was considered at that early period an established custom and an ancient tradition.* The extreme jealousy of the Romish Church in more modern times of the claims of the ancient Church of Jerusalem, show how subversive those claims are of the pretended original supremacy of Rome. The advocates of Rome are careful to inform us that the honour thus

* The Seventh Canon of the Nicene Council runs thus:—*Επειδη συνηθεια κεκρατηκε, και παραδοσις αρχαια, ωστε τον εν Αιλια Επισκοπον τιμασθαι, εχετω την ακολουθιαν της τιμης τη Μητροπολει σωζομενου του οικειου αξιωματος.*

attributed to the bishop of Ælia or Jerusalem, was intended by the Council to be inferior to that which belonged to the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, though the Council itself makes no such declaration.* The Roman Council

* Caranza, Summa Conciliorum, Can. Conc. Nicæn, p. 38. This writer, in common with many others of his Church, evidently felt the difficulty of establishing the Roman claims in opposition to those of Jerusalem. But he cuts the knot at once; and in his controversial treatises prefixed to the "Councils," he boldly repeats the Popish assertion that St. Peter was originally bishop of Jerusalem, and, as such, presided at the Council held there. But Protestant writers had not failed to ask, Why the primacy should not on this ground belong to Jerusalem, or even to Antioch, rather than to Rome? Caranza boldly replies, that according to human reason Rome ought certainly to yield precedence to Jerusalem, but that reason must give way to the Word of God and Divine appointment; acknowledging at the same time that the *written* Word of God contains nothing to the point. (Tertia Controversia, p. 17.) Baronius says, that St. Peter came to Jerusalem on this occasion from Rome, his proper see; and Bellarmine asserts, that the Council was held under his presidency. There are, however,

of the Lateran, in 1215, settled this question to their satisfaction, asserting that whilst the fourth place belonged to Jerusalem, the Roman Church was the mother and mistress of all the faithful in Christ.

The second general Council of Constantinople in a synodal epistle recognising Cyril as the bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, speaks of it as the mother of all other Churches.

Dodwell* asserts very strongly the original supremacy of the Church of Jerusalem, which he supposes to have been transferred to Ephesus after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the death of Symeon its second bishop. But whilst we have scriptural evidence that the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem, under the episcopate of St. James, and during the continuance of the Jewish commonwealth,

many other learned writers amongst the Romanists who oppose so untenable an assertion.—(See Concilia Illustrata, Ruelii, vol. i. pp. 11—15.)

* See Weisman's Hist. Eccl. Sæc. i. § 15, p. 98.

enjoyed pre-eminence and authority over the other Christian Churches, of which she was the acknowledged mother and mistress, we have no authority whatever, either scriptural or ecclesiastical, for believing that the same position was ever occupied, or the same honour ever paid to any other Church. The supremacy of the Church of Jerusalem was suspended and not transferred. The Church of Rome has indeed set up a counterfeit claim to be a second Jerusalem, if not her superior, and that claim has been gradually enforced, by artifice and power, over a large section of the Church; but at the same time it has been met by a firm and undeviating protest and resistance from the Eastern Churches under all their privations and sufferings. The Word of God leads us to expect that the Church of Jerusalem shall yet again flourish, and resume her proper and destined pre-eminence in a Christianized world; when her purity and her light shall shine with

more than original splendour. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."* At that time, "Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord."† Our blessed Lord himself appealed to the language of prophecy as declaring that the house of the Lord at Jerusalem shall yet "be called a house of prayer for all people."‡

On this deeply-interesting subject, Bishop Horsley has some very striking observations in his four sermons upon the forty-fifth Psalm. In the second of these discourses he alludes to the fact, that in the prophecies of the Old Testament, which set forth the union between the Redeemer and his Church under the figure of the state of wedlock, we read of

* Isaiah ii. 2. † Zechariah viii. 22.
‡ See Isaiah lvi. 7, with Mark xi. 17.

two celebrations of that mystical wedding, or rather of a marriage—a separation on account of the woman's incontinence, that is, idolatry—and in the end, of a re-marriage with the woman reclaimed and pardoned. And he thus continues :—

" The original marriage was contracted with the Hebrew Church, by the institution of the Mosaic covenant, at the time of the Exodus, as we are taught expressly by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The separation was the dispersion of the Jewish nation by the Romans, when they were reduced to that miserable state in which to this day they remain, their city laid in ruins, their temple demolished and burnt, and the forms of the Mosaic worship abolished. Then it was that the sceptre of ecclesiastical sway (for that is the sceptre meant in Jacob's famous prophecy) departed from Judah. The Jews were no longer the depositaries of the laws and oracles of God; they were no longer to take the lead in matters

of religion and worship; and the government even of the Christian Church of Jerusalem remained but for a very short time after this in the hands of a bishop of the circumcision. So strictly was the prophecy fulfilled of the departure of the ecclesiastical sceptre from Judah, the only remnant then visibly extant in the world of the Jewish nation. It is the same event which is predicted in many other prophecies, as the expulsion of the incontinent wife from the husband's house. Her expulsion, however, was to be but temporary, though of long duration. It was a separation, as we should say in modern language, from bed and board, not an absolute divorce, such as by the principles of the Mosaic law (which in this point, however, was not perfectly consistent with the original Divine law of marriage) set the woman at liberty to unite herself to another man, and, in that event, prohibited her return to her first husband. On the contrary,

the same prophecies that threatened the expulsion maintain the continuance of the husband's property in the separated woman, and promise a reconciliation and final reinstatement of her in her husband's favour. 'Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?' says the Prophet Isaiah. The question implies a denial that any such instrument existed. And in a subsequent part of his prophecies he expressly announces the reconciliation. 'Blush not,' saith the Redeemer to the pardoned wife, 'for thou shalt not be brought to reproach; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and the reproach of thy deserted state thou shalt no more remember. For thy Maker is thy husband, Jehovah of hosts is his name; and he who claims thee is the Holy One of Israel. As a woman forsaken and deeply afflicted, Jehovah hath recalled thee; and as a wife wedded in youth, but afterwards rejected, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with

great mercies will I receive thee again.' The reconciliation is to be made publicly, by a repetition of the nuptial ceremonies. So we learn from the latter part of the Apocalypse. After Christ's final victory over the apostate faction, proclamation is made by a voice issuing from the throne, 'The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready;' *i. e.*, hath prepared herself, by penitence and reformation, to be re-united to him. And one of the seven angels calls to St. John, 'Come hither, and I will show thee the Lamb's wife.' Then he shows him 'the holy Jerusalem;' *i. e.*, the Church of the converted Jews. These nuptials therefore of the Lamb are not, as some have imagined, a marriage with a second wife, a Gentile Church, taken into the place of the Jewish, irrevocably discarded. No such idea of an absolute divorce is to be found in prophecy. But it is a public reconciliation with the original wife, the *Hebrew Church, become the mother Church*

of Christendom, notified by the ceremony of a re-marriage; for to no other than the reconciled Hebrew Church belongs in prophecy the august character of the queen-consort. The season of this renewed marriage is the second advent, when the new covenant will be established with the natural Israel; and it is this re-marriage which is the proper subject of this psalm."*

And again in the last of these four sermons the Bishop has the following observations on the ninth verse, "King's daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." He says—

"Some expositors have imagined that the consort is an emblem of the Church catholic in her totality,—the king's daughters typical of the several particular Churches of which that one universal is composed. But the queen-consort here is

* Bishop Horsley's Sermons, vol. i. pp. 101—104.

unquestionably *the Hebrew Church,—the Church of the natural Israel*, reunited, by her conversion, to her husband, and *advanced to the high prerogative of the mother Church of Christendom;* and the king's daughters are the Churches which had been gathered out of the Gentiles, in the interval between expulsion of this wife and the taking of her home again,—that is, between the dispersion of the Jews by the Romans and their restoration. The restoration of the Hebrew Church to the rights of the wife—to the situation of the queen-consort in Messiah's kingdom upon earth—is the constant strain of prophecy.

"To prove this by citing all the passages to that purpose, would be to transcribe whole chapters of some of the prophets, and innumerable detached passages from almost all. In addition to those which I have already cited, in my former discourses upon this subject, I shall produce only the latter part of the second chapter

of Hosea. In that chapter, Jehovah, after discarding the incontinent wife, and threatening terrible severity of punishment, adds, that nevertheless the time should come when she should again address her offended Lord by the endearing name of husband. 'And I will betroth thee to myself for ever. Yes; I will betroth thee to myself, with justice, and with righteousness, and with exuberant kindness, and with tender love. Yes; with faithfulness to myself I will betroth thee.' These promises are made to the woman that had been discarded, and cannot be understood of mercies to be extended to any other. The Prophet Isaiah speaks to the same effect, and describes the Gentile converts as becoming, upon the reunion, children of the pardoned wife."*

After quoting the declaration of St. Paul, in the eleventh chapter to the Romans, he adds, "To expound these

* Bishop Horsley's Sermons, vol. i. pp. 160, 161.

predictions of the ancient prophets, and this declaration of the apostle of anything but the restoration of the natural Israel, is to introduce ambiguity and equivocation into the plainest oracles of God."

I cannot refrain from quoting one passage more from the same sermon.

"This submission* of the consort to her wedded Lord will set her high in the esteem of the Churches of the Gentiles."

"See the daughter of Tyre with a gift;
"The wealthiest of the people shall entreat thy favour."†

"'The daughter of Tyre,' according to the principles of interpretation we have laid down, must be a Church established either literally at Tyre, or in some country held forth under the image of Tyre. Ancient Tyre was famous for her commerce, her wealth, her excellence in

* Alluding to Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

† In our authorized translation, ver. 12, it stands thus:—And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.

the fine arts, her luxury, the profligate debauched manners of her people, and the grossness of her idolatry. The 'daughter of Tyre,' appearing before the queen-consort 'with a gift,' is a figurative prediction that Churches will be established, under the protection of the government, in countries which had been distinguished for profligacy, dissipated manners, and irreligion. It is intimated in the next line, that some of these Churches will be rich; that is, rich in spiritual riches, which are the only riches of a Church, in the mystic language of prophecy,—rich in the holy lives of their members, in the truth of their creeds, and the purity of their external forms of worship, and in God's favour. But notwithstanding this wealth of their own, *these Churches will pay willing homage to the royal consort, their eldest sister, the metropolitical Church of Jerusalem.*"*

* Bishop Horsley's Sermons, vol. i. pp. 165, 166.

I offer no apology for the length of these extracts, which, as referring to prophecy, might at first sight seem out of place in a treatise professedly historical. It must be acknowledged that it is a prophecy which throws a peculiar and intense interest over the history of the early Hebrew Church of Jerusalem. And I indulge the hope that this attempt to delineate the history, the character, and the prerogative of that venerable mother of all Churches, may serve to illustrate the glorious predictions of her future pre-eminence. The past is an earnest and type of the future. The book of prophecy was opened by St. Peter, at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, of which we have an instance in the reference to the Book of Joel. It was closed again, as it were for a season, as to the full disclosure of its promised blessings, by that national impenitence and unbelief on account of which Jerusalem was doomed to "be trodden down

of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* But the day is approaching when the Church of Jerusalem shall rise again, and the voice shall be heard, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."†

* Luke xxi. 24. † Isaiah lii. 1, 2.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EPISCOPATE OF ST. JAMES.

Question whether James, the Brother of our Lord, was the Apostle James, the son of Alphœus.—Discrepancy of Ancient Authors.—Testimony of Scripture seems decisive.—General Opinion of the Church in favour of their Identity.—His Relationship to our Lord.—His Appointment to the Bishopric of Jerusalem.—Importance of the occasion.—The Character of his Episcopate.—Veneration in which he was held amongst the Jews.—Testimony of Hegesippus.—Epistle of St. James, addressed to the Jews of the Dispersion generally.—Martyrdom of St. James.—Note on the supposed Inaccuracies of Hegesippus.—His Account not contradictory to that of Josephus.—Burial of the Martyr.

In collecting together what Scripture and ecclesiastical history have recorded concerning the history of the first Bishop

of Jerusalem, it is perhaps necessary to notice the question which has been raised, whether James, the son of Alphæus, the apostle commonly called James the less, and James, the brother of our Lord, and first Bishop of Jerusalem, were the same person. The evidence of Scripture is first to be examined; and it appears to be conclusive in favour of their identity. The Jews objected to the humble origin of our Lord, saying that his brethren were *James*, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas.* And amongst the women who attended at his crucifixion, we learn from St. Mark (xv. 40) that there was "Mary, the *mother of James the less* and of Joses," and from St. John (xix. 25), that there were the mother of Jesus and "his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas." Both evangelists evidently refer to the same person; and St. Paul's language seems conclusive where, in his Epistle to the Galatians, mentioning his

* Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.

visits to Jerusalem to see Peter, he says, "Other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother."* And again, referring to a subsequent visit, he classes together the three apostles, "James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars."† With reference to the testimony of antiquity, it has never been questioned that James, the brother of our Lord, was the Bishop of Jerusalem;‡ and that he was likewise the same person as James the Apostle, is the prevailing opinion both amongst ancient and modern writers.§

* Gal. i. 19. "This text seems decisive in favour of the apostleship of James."—Lardner, vol. vi. p. 165, "Life of James the Lord's brother."

† Gal. ii. 9.

‡ "Certum est ex tota antiquitate, Jacobum fratrem Domini Episcopum ecclesiæ fuisse Hierosolymitanæ."—Weisman Hist. Eccles., sæc. i. § xix. p. 66.

§ Such is the assertion of Weisman, in his History of James the less (see as above), though he adds, that some, both of the ancients and moderns, have dissented from that opinion.

Ancient writers are not agreed in what sense he was called the "brother of our Lord," an honourable title by which he is distinguished in Scripture and generally known by all Christian writers. The two passages just quoted, in which St. Mark speaks of "Mary, the mother of James the less," and St. John of "Mary, the wife of Cleophas," sister to the Virgin Mary, as being present at the crucifixion, seem to justify the conclusion that St. James was the son of Cleophas, or Alphæus, and of Mary, and thus was first cousin to our Lord. Jerome was of this opinion, and quotes the passage from St. John; but it was an ancient opinion that St. James was the son of Joseph by a former wife. This opinion is followed by Cave in his "Life of James the less," where he states, that "he was the son (as we may probably conjecture) of Joseph, afterwards husband to the blessed Virgin, and his first wife; and hence reputed our Lord's brother, in the same sense

that He was reputed the son of Joseph." . . . "Jerome and some others will have Christ's brethren so called, because sons of Mary, cousin german, or, according to the custom of the Hebrew language, sister to the Virgin Mary. But Eusebius, Epiphanius, and the far greater part of the ancients, (from whom, especially in matters of fact, we are not rashly to depart,) make them the children of Joseph by a former wife. And this seems most genuine and natural, the evangelists seeming very express and accurate in the account which they give of them. 'Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Jude?' (Matthew xiii. 55, 56.) By which it is plain that the Jews understood these persons not to be Christ's kinsmen only, but his brothers, the same carpenter's sons, having the same relation to him that Christ himself had; though they indeed had more, Christ

being but his reputed, they his natural sons."

Of course, the obvious objection to this, if we conclude that James, the brother of our Lord, was an apostle, is, that James the Apostle is called the son of Alphæus, and that his mother was alive at the time of the crucifixion.

After all, it seems clear that on this particular point the opinion of ancient writers (for we have nothing that can strictly be called *testimony*) affords us little assistance beyond the assurance (no unimportant one) that no decided tradition existed on the subject; and we are therefore thrown back upon the text of Scripture. In this, as well as in numberless other instances, both in questions of fact and of doctrine, the easiest and most satisfactory course seems to be to compare Scripture with Scripture. Nor can we dismiss this inquiry as unimportant and uninteresting. We have seen in how many instances the Word of God has

distinctly marked the relationship subsisting between the different persons connected with the present inquiry; in that blessed book there is nothing written without a design, nothing that is unprofitable, nothing that will not repay a serious and patient investigation.

It is perhaps necessary to recall the attention to the real state of the question. On the fact that James, the brother of our Lord, was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, there is no question whatever. Holy Scripture is decisive in our view of its plain meaning. It is highly satisfactory to know that the full and clear testimony of antiquity unanimously confirms this view, and that the universal Church has concurred in it. To a certain extent we may allow that it *has* been questioned whether the first Bishop of Jerusalem was actually one of the original twelve; and, to a still greater extent, whether he were our Lord's brother in the more restricted, or in a wider sense.

I should scarcely think it necessary to allude to this controversy* if doubts were not occasionally thrown upon it by modern writers. The general opinion of the Church has certainly been that the first Bishop of Jerusalem was *the Apostle* James, the son of Alphæus; nor will any attentive reader of the Scriptures readily conceive how it can be questioned. Whitby, in his preface to the General Epistle to St. James, puts this very clearly, and shows that the general testimony of antiquity, when fairly weighed, is to the same purpose. In the course of his observations on the subject, he says, "Of this James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, who was styled the Just, St. Jerome†

* The subject is very fully discussed, and the different opinions brought forward, by Lardner. (Works, vol. vi., "Life of James, the brother of our Lord.") It is more summarily and very fully stated by Whitby, and also by Macknight, in their Commentaries on the Epistle of St. James. These three writers adopt the conclusion stated above.

† Jerome's words are, "Jacobus, qui appellatur

saith, that he was the son of Mary, the sister of the mother of our Lord, of whom St. John makes mention (xix. 25), where she is styled the wife of Cleophas, or Alphæus, and by St. Mark (xv. 40) the mother of James the less."

We now return to the history of the first Bishop of Jerusalem. It was at some period before the martyrdom of James, the son of Zebedee, and the brother of John, as we gather from the sacred history, that St. James assumed the authority of the episcopate. Such an event could only have taken place with the concurrence of the rest of the apostles; and we cannot therefore imagine that so important a measure as the settlement of the Church of Jerusalem, the mother

frater Domini, cognomento Justus, ut nonnulli existimant Josephi ex alia uxore, ut autem mihi videtas, Mariæ uxoris matris Domini (cujus Joannes in libro suo meminit) filius, post passionem Domini, ab Apostolis Hierosolymorum Episcopus ordinatus, unam tantum scripsit Epistolam, quæ de septem Catholicis est."—Jerom. Verbo Jacobus.

Church, and the model of all future Churches, could have been determined at such a time and under such circumstances otherwise than under the special direction of the Holy Ghost. All ancient writers mention this appointment as one of peculiar interest, and as made with great solemnity and under a Divine sanction. Some of the early fathers speak of it as originating in the personal direction of our Lord himself before his ascension; others ascribe it to the apostles; and some refer to it in one place as our Lord's act, and in another as that of the apostles, plainly showing that in the estimation of the Church in general the establishment of the bishopric of Jerusalem was neither the offspring of accidental circumstances, nor the mere result of a wise and prudential consideration of the circumstances of the Church, but the solemn act of the apostles of Christ, in conformity with his gracious purpose, and under the special direction of the Holy Ghost.

The apostolical bishop thus divinely appointed had early to encounter the second storm of persecution which was raised against the infant Church through the hostility of Herod, and his desire to gain popularity amongst the Jews by "vexing the Church." James, the brother of John, was put to death; and Peter was only rescued from a similar fate by the miraculous interposition of an angel. Peter's message to the chief pastor on this occasion shows, that it was to him that the praying Church looked up as the appointed instrument of directing, strengthening, and comforting them in the hour of trial. The fearful judgment of God upon Herod stayed for a season the sufferings of the Church.

The wisdom displayed by St. James in the maintenance of the pure doctrine of the Gospel, his deep interest in the spread of Christianity amongst the Gentiles, his clear views of their liberty in Christ, his steadfast and enlightened attachment to

the national peculiarities of his own Church, his dignified maintenance of its privileges, and his jealous regard to the conscientious scruples of its members, have already come under our notice. So far we have had the Bible for our guide. He is frequently mentioned by early writers, and invariably spoken of as a man held in great esteem both amongst believers and unbelievers. Jerome, in his commentary on Galatians i. 19, says, "This James was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and was surnamed 'the Just,' a man of such sanctity, and so highly esteemed amongst the people, that they would crowd around him and strive to touch the hem of his garment." He governed the Church with unblemished reputation for a period of between twenty and thirty years,* in a time of awful

* The length of his episcopate depends, of course, upon the period of his original appointment. It is generally taken for granted that he was appointed at an early period; but no traces

degeneracy amongst the Jews, whose national destruction was fast approaching.

Eusebius,* the ecclesiastical historian, is the principal, perhaps it may be said, the only original source of information respecting the closing period of his episcopate. He quotes, however, the testimony of two Christian writers of the second century: Hegesippus, whom he speaks of as a man in the next age to the apostles, and Clement of Alexandria. The narrative of Hegesippus, himself a Hebrew Christian, conveys the idea that the memory of St. James was held in extraordinary veneration; and though there are in it some expressions which may not be strictly correct, there seems no reason to discredit his general testimony. He has, no doubt, faithfully recorded the strong impression which was

of his Episcopal authority appear in Scripture before the martyrdom of James, the brother of John.

* Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., lib. ii. cap. 23.

left on the minds of the Christians of Judea of the deep piety, the exemplary life, the strong national attachment, the meekness of wisdom, and the simple Christian faith which, as the Word of God prepares us to expect, were to the very last so conspicuous in the character of St. James. We are told that he practised peculiar abstinence, and are led to infer that he lived after the rule of the Nazarites.* "He entered into the temple alone, where he prayed upon his knees." Conscious of the impending ruin of his nation, mourning over the infatuation of his countrymen and fellow-citizens, humbling himself for the crying abominations of the land of his fathers,—the land which was Immanuel's land, and the fathers who were the friends of God,—like Daniel, and Ezra, and Nehemiah, he might well refuse the ordinary gratifications of life, adopt a course of peculiar self-denial, and whilst he pleaded the

* See Numbers vi.

promises and the covenant, earnestly seek in fervent prayer to stay the hand of the destroyer, and avert the coming vengeance. We read of Anna, who not long before, "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day;" * and are not surprised to find the first bishop of the devoted city described in the simple language of the earliest ecclesiastical historian, as a man so "instant in prayer,"—insomuch that his knees were become like the knees of a camel, by means of his being continually upon them, worshipping God, and praying for the forgiveness of the people. His Christianity, whilst it opened his heart warmly to welcome the Gentiles into the bosom of Christ's Church, and enlightened his understanding so as to enable him clearly to discern and decidedly to assert their freedom from the obligations of the Jewish national covenant, did not destroy his sympathies for

* Luke ii. 37.

the land of his birth, or weaken his interest in the peculiar promises which were his people's birthright. He was not only the first Christian bishop, but he was the bishop of a Hebrew Church in the land and in the city of the Jews.

The same authority informs us that some even of the opposing sects of the Jews were so influenced by the consistency and holiness of his character that they asked him, "What is the gate of salvation?" and upon his answering, "Jesus is the Saviour, or the way of salvation," some of them became believers in the Messiahship of Jesus.

It was in all probability within a year or two of his martyrdom that St. James *

* The opinion of the Nonconformist commentator, Dr. Gill, is not unimportant on more than one point. After alluding to the unfounded notion that has been broached, that this epistle was written by James, the son of Zebedee, he says, "It seems, therefore more agreeable to ascribe this epistle to James, the son of Alphæus, sometimes called the brother of our Lord, and who was present at the

wrote the epistle which bears his name. It is addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad,* and though it has a special reference to the Christian Israelites, yet it was evidently directed to the Jews generally. It was natural and fitting, that the apostolical bishop of the Church of the circumcision at Jerusalem should address a pastoral epistle to the great body of his countrymen throughout the world, as a partaker and witness of the common hope of Israel. Accordingly, whilst he writes as a Christian apostle, for the particular comfort and instruction of those who had obtained like precious

assembly at Jerusalem, where the necessity of the Gentiles' circumcision was debated, (Acts xv.,) and is the same whom Eusebius calls James the Just, and Oblias; and who seems to have resided at Jerusalem, and to have been the bishop or overseer of the Church there; and therefore in character writes this epistle to the Jews, in the several parts of the world."—Gill, in the Introduction to the Epistle of St. James.

* Ταις δωδεκα φυλαις ταις εν τη διασπορα—to the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion.

faith with himself, he does not lose sight of his connexion in the bonds of the national covenant with the whole commonwealth of Israel, nor forget that the hope on which he trusted was the hope of the promise made of God unto their fathers. Some commentators consider this epistle to be exclusively addressed to Jewish Christians, on the simple ground probably of its forming part of the canon of the New Testament. But it has been shown by Whitby, Lardner, and others, that this supposition is negatived by the inscription of the epistle. The salutation with which it is commenced does not recognise the common bond of Christian communion, but is of a more general nature; and there are portions of it which can scarcely be considered applicable either to the character or actual circumstances of Christians at that period. At all events, we cannot err in adhering to the plain testimony of the Word of God itself, and this tells us that St. James

wrote "to the twelve tribes." This epistle will be best understood when considered in this point of view. The unbelieving Jews were not in the same position with reference to the Gospel as the unconverted Gentiles. They were professedly believers in a Messiah, though they rejected the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ to that character. The Gospel was the fulfilment of their own promises, and the substance of their long-cherished hopes. The final separation was not yet made between the believing and unbelieving portions of the nation. The disciples of Christ at Jerusalem still worshipped at the same temple, with the rest of their brethren; and in other places both parties, probably, still frequented the same synagogues * in common. St. James therefore addressed an epistle to them in common, in which,

* James ii. 2, "If there come unto your assembly," marg. "synagogue." Gr. εις την συναγωγην υμων.

whilst he administers instruction and consolation to the believers in Christ, he warns unbelievers of the approaching calamities of their nation, reproves their rejection and crucifixion of "the Just One," and denounces their factious spirit, their worldly-mindedness, their grasping thirst of gain, and their oppression of the poor. In his condemnation of a dead and unproductive "faith," in which he uses expressions seemingly at variance with those of the Apostle Paul, he uses that important word in the sense familiar to the Jews, as synonymous with "creed," and shows that it is not by mere adherence to creed, however true,* that salvation is to be obtained; in proof of which he appeals to the example of Abraham's

* James ii. 19, "Thou believest that there is one God." Those who are acquainted with the manner in which the Jews repeat, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," and with the importance which they attach to this profession of their faith, independent of any practical influence, will see the force of the apostle's language.

faith. This epistle may thus be considered as containing the last inspired warning to the nation of Israel.

The martyrdom of St. James is ascribed to the effect of his preaching and living, upon the distinguished men of that day, many of whom received the Gospel; in consequence of which, "there was a disturbance among the Jews, and among the Scribes and Pharisees, who said there was danger, lest all the people should think Jesus to be the Christ. Coming therefore to James, they said, We beseech thee to restrain the error of the people. We entreat thee to persuade all that come hither at the time of passover to think rightly concerning Jesus; for all the people and all of us put confidence in thee. Stand, therefore, upon the battlement of the temple, that being placed on high thou mayest be conspicuous, and thy words may be easily heard by all the people. For because of the passover all the tribes are come hither, and many

Gentiles. Therefore the Scribes and Pharisees before named placed James upon the battlement of the temple, and cried out to him and said, O Justus, whom we ought all to believe, since the people are in an error, following Jesus who was crucified, tell us 'What is the gate of Jesus?'* And he answered with a loud

* The question, "What is the gate of Jesus?" has occasioned some dispute; and this, together with other expressions in the account of Hegesippus, as given by Eusebius, has led some writers to question the whole statement of that author, without any really adequate reason. Let it be remembered that the Jews had their own peculiar customs, idioms, and modes of expression; that the habits and practices of ancient Jerusalem were known only historically to Hegesippus himself; and that nothing was more easy than for one who wrote in Greek to convey wrong or defective impressions of conversations which took place in Hebrew a hundred years previously. If, in addition to this, we consider that our acquaintance with the testimony of Hegesippus is derived from the works of Eusebius, who wrote at least a hundred and fifty years later, we are quite prepared to expect certain inaccuracies as to expressions or circumstances, without impugning the general veracity of the

voice, 'Why do ye ask me concerning the Son of Man; he ever sitteth in the

author. Indeed the very simplicity of the account of Hegesippus seems to vouch for its truth. He speaks of St. James as if he were specially permitted to enter the holy place, and of course it has been objected that this was impossible under the Jewish ordinances. A very slight explanation would probably make the author's meaning clear. The tradition that the apostle's knees had become hard with praying, is exactly what was likely to be said in any age, of a man of extraordinary piety and devotion.

Mosheim suggests a very probable explanation of the question, "What is the gate of Jesus?" He says, "The Jews manifestly had it in view to learn from James what he deemed the way or the gate of salvation, or in other words, the true means of obtaining eternal life. I have, therefore, not the least doubt but that speaking in their vernacular tongue, they made use of the term, (יְשׁוּעָה) Jeschuah, salvation; and that their question to James, consequently, was—What is, in your opinion, the gate of salvation? By what means may we arrive at eternal life? But the Greek translator, either through inattention or for want of sufficient skill in the Hebrew language, mistaking this term for the proper name of our Saviour Jesus, instead of rendering the question as he ought to have done,

heaven, at the right hand of the great power, and will come in the clouds of heaven.' And many were fully satisfied, and well pleased with the testimony of James, saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David.' But the same Scribes and Pharisees said one to another, We have done wrong in procuring such a testimony to Jesus. Let us go up and throw him down, that the people may be terrified from giving credit to him. And they immediately went up and cast him down, and said, Let us stone James the just. And they began to stone him, because he was not killed with the fall. But he turning himself, kneeled, saying, 'I entreat thee, O Lord God the Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' As they were stoning him,

τις η θυρα της σωτηριας; What is the gate or door of salvation? translated it τις η θυρα Ιησου; What is the gate of Jesus?" Mŏsheim de reb. Christ. ant. Constant. Sæc. i. §. 23, not. (Vol. i. p. 163. Vidal's Trans.)

some one said, 'Give over; what do ye? The just man prays for you.' And one of them, a fuller, took a pole which was used to beat cloth with, and struck him on the head. Thus his martyrdom was completed. . . . . This James was a true witness to Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus is the Christ. And soon after, Judea was invaded by Vespasian, and the people were carried captive."

Such is the account given by Hegesippus, as preserved by Eusebius, of the martyrdom of this distinguished servant of Jesus Christ; and the fact of his being thrown down from a battlement of the temple, and finally killed by a fuller's club, is corroborated by another quotation from a portion (not now extant) of the writings of Clement, of Alexandria, who likewise lived in the second century. There is no reason whatever to discredit this account thus preserved by Eusebius, who appeals to his authorities; and his statement is evidently in accordance with

the general persuasion of Christians both before and after his time. The main facts are referred to by Jerome* and Epiphanius.† Eusebius also quotes a passage from Josephus, in which it is alleged that St. James was summoned before a council by Ananus, the high priest, and a Sadducee, during the interval between the death of one Roman governor and the arrival of another, and that he was judicially condemned to be stoned. The authenticity of this passage in Josephus has been questioned by some on account of the favourable manner in which he speaks of St. James as a Christian; but there appears no adequate reason for this; and it by no means necessarily contradicts the statement in Eusebius. The arraignment and martyrdom of St. Stephen, and the mock-formalities adopted by another Sadducæan high priest, in the

* Jerome de Viris Illustribus i. cap. 2. Comm. in Gal. c. i. t. iv. 237.

† Epiphanius Hæres. 78, No. xiv.

case of St. Paul, are instances in point which show how completely the forms of justice and the rage of popular tumult were mixed up together in the latter days of the Jewish Commonwealth. All agree that the cruel martyrdom of a man so holy, and held in such general veneration, produced a lively sensation amongst the Jews generally; and there was a general disposition to regard that savage act as hastening the Divine judgment on the devoted city.

Nor need we wonder how it came to pass that the enemies of Christianity should think of appealing to St. James in so marked and public a manner. They hoped to have gained him over by flattery, or to have betrayed him into some compromise of the truth. Those whose "leaven was hypocrisy,"* would see no insuperable difficulty in this. We have an instance of a somewhat similar appeal made to our blessed Lord, when

* Luke xii. 1.

he attended the feast of the dedication, and walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly?" Here, with great apparent earnestness, they put a question which had been answered already, not only by the frequent declarations, but by the whole life and character of our Lord, and in receiving a reply, "they took up stones *again* to stone him;"* having done the same thing in the temple itself on a former occasion,† when our Lord only escaped their violence by the exercise of his Divine power.

Hegesippus states that St. James was buried near the spot where he fell, and that his monument was still remaining near the temple. Jerome alludes to the same thing, but says that some believed that he was buried on Mount Olivet. It

* John x. 24—31. † Ib. viii. 59.

was highly probable, at all events, that some monument was subsequently erected after the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Hebrew Church, who returned to the beloved spot; and that this was in existence in the time of Hegesippus, when those who revered his memory would gladly believe that his remains lay buried there. But even its earlier erection would not be remarkably inconsistent with the almost superstitious veneration which the unbelieving Jews entertained for St. James, or with the character of those who, in their worst days, garnished the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers had slain.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EPISCOPATE OF SYMEON.

Election of Symeon as Successor of St. James.—Similarity of Names in early Church History.—Increasing Troubles of the Jewish Nation.—Extraordinary preservation of the Hebrew-Christian Church.—Retirement to Pella.—Destruction of Jerusalem.—Return of the Church to the Ruins of the Holy City.—Roman Jealousy of the Family of David.—Inquiries for them by Vespasian and Domitian.—Flourishing State of the Church during the latter Years of Symeon.—Martyrdom and Constancy of Symeon.

EUSEBIUS informs us, that it was in his day the general opinion that, on the death of St. James, the apostles and immediate disciples of our Lord who were yet alive met together from all parts

in the same place, together also with the kinsmen of our Lord according to the flesh, in order to deliberate upon the choice of a successor in the see of Jerusalem; and that their unanimous choice fell upon Symeon, the son of Cleophas, of whom the history of the Gospel makes mention. Symeon was understood to have been cousin german by the mother's side to our Saviour. Hegesippus relates that Cleophas was the brother of Joseph.*

It is only necessary to remark, that, whilst all antiquity asserts that Symeon, the son of Cleophas, was the second Bishop of Jerusalem, much confusion has arisen with reference to the earlier period of ecclesiastical history from the identity or similitude of names.

Cave† justly observes that we have an instance of this with reference to the person whose history is now under con-

* Eusebius Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 11.

† Cave's Apostolici—Life of St. Symeon, p. 90.

sideration, "whom," as he writes, "some will have to be the same with St. Simon the Canaanite, one of the twelve apostles; others confound him with Simon, one of the four brethren of our Lord, whilst a third sort make all three to be but one and the same person; the sound and similitude of names giving birth to the several mistakes." But whilst it may be readily conceded that Simon the Apostle, called by St. Matthew, Simon the Canaanite,* and by St. Luke, Simon Zelotes,† was a different person, it is not so clear that Symeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem was not the same Simon who is mentioned as one of the Lord's brethren. Doctor Burton, in his "Lectures on the Ecclesiastical History of the first three Centuries," considers him to have been the brother of the martyred bishop, and that they were both of them the sons of Cleophas and Mary,

* Matt. x. 4.

† Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13.

who is mentioned as the sister of the Virgin.*

Symeon was raised to the important office of Bishop of Jerusalem no great length of time before the destruction of Jerusalem.†

The Jewish nation were now rapidly filling up the measure of their iniquities. The oppression of Florus, the Roman Governor, and the factious spirit of party amongst the Jews, led to a violent and bloody insurrection. This must have been a trying period to the Christian Israelites. Cestius Gallus, the Roman

* Burton's Lectures on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. pp. 104, 290.

† In the passage already quoted, Eusebius seems to place the appointment of Symeon after the destruction of Jerusalem; but he elsewhere places Symeon's succession immediately after St. James's martyrdom. No other author alludes to a vacancy of the see. Some little time must necessarily have elapsed in the assembling together of the eminent persons by whom, according to Eusebius, Symeon was elected, and shortly after this he must have retired from Jerusalem.

President of Syria, after taking a few cities of comparatively little importance, laid siege to Jerusalem; and it is the opinion of Josephus, the Jewish historian, that if he had made a resolute assault upon the city he would easily have taken it, and put an end to the war. Instead, however, of taking this decided step, he retired from before the city, and sustained a defeat in an attack of the exasperated Jews. This closed the door of reconciliation with their Roman masters, and accordingly both sides prepared for a fierce conflict.

In this interval, so remarkably ordered by Divine Providence, Josephus states that many of the most distinguished of the inhabitants forsook the city, and though he does not mention the Christians, they were undoubtedly of the number. It is related by Christian writers that they retired to a city called Pella, on the eastern side of the Jordan. Eusebius states that the whole congre-

gation of the Church in Jerusalem, according to a Divine warning given to certain eminent persons before the war, were commanded to depart out of the city, and inhabit Pella, beyond Jordan.* And Epiphanius, in allusion to this event, says in one place that they were warned by an angel,† but in another that they were forewarned by Christ.‡ It was clearly the opinion of the ancient Church

* "And, furthermore, when the whole congregation of the Church in Jerusalem, according to an oracle given by revelation to the approved persons among them before the war, were commanded to depart out of the city, and inhabit a certain city (they call it Pella) beyond Jordan; into which, when those that believed in Christ had removed from Jerusalem, and when the holy men had, as it were, totally relinquished the princely metropolis of the Jews and the whole country of Judea, then at length Divine vengeance seized them who had dealt so unjustly with Christ and his apostles, and utterly destroyed that wicked and abominable generation from among men."—Eusebius Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 5.

† Epiphanius de Pond. et Mens. § xv.

‡ Epiphanius in Hæres. Nazar. vii.

that the Church of Jerusalem was under the special care of Providence, and that its members were directed to avail themselves of the favourable opportunity which occurred of saving themselves from the overthrow of the city, in conformity with the words of our Saviour, "Let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains."*

The presence of the Church had been hitherto the defence of Jerusalem; and the removal of the faithful band of Hebrew-Christians was like the removal of Lot from the devoted cities of the plain. The forbearance of God was manifested towards the nation of the Jews by the preservation of the Church in their metropolitan city. Thus Eusebius speaks of "the endearing goodness of the most excellent providence of God, deferring the destruction of the unbelieving Jews full forty years after their most audacious wickedness committed against Christ. During which space many of the apostles

* Matt. xxiv. 16.

and disciples (and James himself, the first bishop there, who was called the brother of our Lord) being yet alive, and making their abode in the city of Jerusalem, continued to be a most impregnable fortification to that place."*

It is said that many of the Jews were so struck with the evident interposition of God in the preservation of the Christians, that they were induced in consequence to embrace the Gospel at this time.†

The calamities of Jerusalem and Judea

* Eusebius Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 7.

† This statement is made by Doctor Burton (Lect. on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 306), and also by Mosheim (De reb. Christ. ant. Constant. Sæc. i. § 58, note), who refers to Eusebius Eccles. Hist. iii. 35. The passage of Eusebius, however, merely informs us that the Church of the circumcision was exceedingly numerous at the death of Symeon, from which we may fairly draw the conclusion stated by these two writers. The care of Christ for the Church of Jerusalem must have been a very striking testimony both to Jews and Gentiles.

now began to hasten fearfully to their tremendous consummation. The unsuccessful commander, Cestius Gallus, died of disease or grief; and the Emperor Nero immediately dispatched Vespasian, one of the most distinguished of his generals, against the rebellious Jews. In two years he had spread devastation throughout the whole country, and destroyed the principal cities, and presented himself before Jerusalem, which was now the only place which had not yielded to the victorious arms of the Romans. The death of Nero and the distractions of the Roman empire occasioned a short pause in the work of destruction, and caused Vespasian to turn his attention to other quarters. The infatuation and hostility of the Jews was, however, in no way abated during this interval; and Vespasian being proclaimed Emperor, sent back his son Titus without delay to prosecute the war with vigour. Titus laid siege to Jerusalem with an army of sixty thousand Roman soldiers.

The season of the Passover had brought together multitudes of Jews from all parts of the world, when he closely invested the city on all sides. The sense of impending ruin did not allay the violence of faction; and with a powerful and determined enemy at their gates, intestine strife raged as fiercely as ever. The days were come which the rejected Saviour had foretold—"That thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."* The devoted city fell, an awful monument of Divine vengeance; and the recital of the dreadful sufferings of its wretched inhabitants fills, to this day, the most affecting page in the history of mankind.

During this painful interval the Church of God abode safely in the retirement of

* Luke xix. 43, 44.

Pella, under the care of its Divine Saviour, doubtless anxiously waiting the much-dreaded event, like Abraham watching for the destruction of the cities of the plain. When the storm was gone by, and the calamity was overpast, this faithful band of Christians returned under the guardianship of their bishop, the holy Symeon, to the beloved spot, now a heap of ruins, but endeared to them by the most overwhelming and sacred recollections, when they once more erected the standard of the cross, and continued, for some time at least, unmolested in the exercise of their simple Christian worship on Sion's hallowed hill. We are not informed of the precise period of their return, but there is reason to think that it was soon after the destruction of the city. Great numbers of Hebrew-Christians must have been dispersed or remained behind in their late retreat, and doubtless they were made instrumental in

the conversion of others of their countrymen.

Eusebius mentions that after the taking of Jerusalem, Vespasian ordered a strict inquiry to be made after all the descendants of David then remaining,* fearing that the existence of the Royal race of Judah would become a rallying-point for a fresh outbreak of rebellion amongst the Jews. The Heathen Emperor probably participated in those jealous apprehensions by which on a former occasion the cruel Herod was instigated to the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem. The same historian relates that this was the cause of renewed persecution of the Jews; and thus this people, who excused their murder of the true Messiah on the grounds of their fears of Roman jealousy, actually excited the jealousy which they pretended to deprecate; and were severely punished for their neglect of David's Royal seed, in being made the

* Eusebius Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. 12.

victims of misplaced suspicion on their account.

It does not appear that Symeon, who was of "the lineage of David," was molested on this occasion, and it is therefore possible that this inquiry took place before his return from Pella.

The same author states, on the authority of Hegesippus, that a similar inquiry was afterwards made by the Emperor Domitian,* and that certain heretics accused the posterity of St. Jude, the apostle, as being both descendants of David, and kinsmen of Jesus Christ; on which two of them were summoned to the Imperial presence. Their examination is given at length, from which it appeared that they subsisted by hard labour, and that they entertained no ambitious views of a temporal kingdom. They were in consequence dismissed with contempt, and the persecution on this account was stopped.

* Eusebius Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 19, 20.

After this the Church of Jerusalem appears to have suffered no further molestation from without, during the episcopate of Symeon. They enjoyed a profound peace; they kept their solemn assemblies; and were renowned for the flourishing state of religion, and for the remarkable miracles that were wrought amongst them.* Their numbers seemed to have increased, partly from the gradual return of many whom the Jewish war had scattered, and partly from the progress of conversion amongst the Jews themselves. At the accession of the next bishop, the Church was evidently numerous and still influential.

The venerable Symeon was permitted to govern the Church for some time, and to attain a good old age. But the crown of martyrdom was in reserve for him. His descent from David afforded a plausible pretext for the enemies of pure Christianity. Accordingly, in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, he was dragged

* Epiphanius de Mens. et Ponder. 15.

before the tribunal of Atticus,* the Roman governor of Syria, and charged with being both of the family of David and a Christian. He was under examination for several days, and endured various kinds of torture. His constancy in the faith, and his patience under suffering, shone so conspicuously under this trial, that the governor and his attendants were filled with astonishment and admiration. But he was not permitted to escape. It was, perhaps, more than a Heathen magistrate could understand how he could occupy so eminent and influential a post at the head of at least many thousand Jews, and not be an object of just suspicion.† The Roman would hardly distinguish between the spiritual authority which the venerable martyr exercised as a bishop of the Church and that

* See Eusebius Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 32, "How Symeon, the Bishop of Jerusalem, suffered martyrdom."

† Burton's Lectures, &c., vol. ii. lect. xiii. p. 17.

degree of political importance which was deemed to be so dangerous in the possession of a lineal descendant of David. False accusers would not be wanting; and eventually Symeon was, at the advanced age of one hundred and twenty, condemned to be crucified, and thus to glorify God by suffering the same death which his Divine Master and kinsman, according to the flesh, had endured about seventy years before.

He died about the year 104, having presided over the Church of Jerusalem upwards of forty years. He was the last venerable remnant of the apostolical men who had been contemporary with the Lord Jesus himself in the days of his flesh. The Apostle John had died in a good old age not long before, having survived the rest of his brother apostles. Henceforward the absence of these authoritative guides, the depression of the Jewish nation, and the prostrate condition of Jerusalem itself,

prepare us to expect trying scenes in the closing history of this venerable mother of all Churches. To this period must be referred the affecting declaration of Hegesippus quoted in a former chapter.* Hitherto "the Church continued a pure and undefiled virgin." It was like Israel of old, who served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and of the elders who outlived Joshua. Heresy began to lift up its head in the Church of Jerusalem, as well as in the Churches of the Gentiles. In addition to this, other causes conspired to hasten its dissolution as a distinct "Church of the Circumcision."

* See pp. 52, 53.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOSING HISTORY AND DISPERSION OF THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

Critical Circumstances of the Church at the Death of Symeon.—Effect of the cessation of the Temple Worship on Hebrew Christians.—Consequences of temporary Retreat to Pella.—Appointment of Justus to the Episcopate.—Rivalry and subsequent Heresy of Thebuthis.—Scanty Information respecting the closing Period of the Church of Jerusalem.—Succession of Bishops.—Baptism and Apostasy of Aquila.—The new City, Ælia, commenced by Adrian.—Heathen Insults offered to the Jews.—Rebellion under Barchochebas.—Sufferings of the Christians.—Banishment of the Jews from Judea.—Dissolution of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem.—Formation of a Gentile Church amongst the Roman Inhabitants.

THE death of Symeon was a critical event in the history of the Church of

Jerusalem. He was, as has been already observed, the last of a distinguished company of apostles, and apostolic men, who had been contemporary with our blessed Lord in the days of his humiliation on earth. The circumstances of the Church itself were remarkably changed. Since the accession of Symeon, the Jewish economy had been broken up; the Church of the circumcision, though mercifully preserved from the sword of the invader, could no longer maintain the commanding aspect of former days; the Church was humbled with the nation; it was no longer a national witness for Israel's King and Saviour, "in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God;"* its fugitive members could no longer say, with the devoted and blessed company who had gone before them, "We have thought of thy loving-kindness in the midst of thy temple;" the Church was shorn of its national privilege and glory,

* Psalm xlviii. 8.

and its members were henceforth strangers on their native soil, and were barely permitted to pitch their tents on the ruins of their desolated home. The grand series of their national observances had been violently but providentially swept away, the whole structure of their national worship was buried under the ruins of the temple, and they had little of external ordinance left that was not shorn of its power, and utterly bereft of significancy. There was scarcely anything of purely Mosaic institution left for faith to grasp; it was no longer as when the Christian worshipper could devoutly follow the varied ordinances of the temple service, and under the influence of that Spirit which, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, taught a Christian Hebrew how to worship, could, in that Divine ceremonial, trace the work of Christ from his sacrifice to his exaltation, from his cross to his crown.

This change could not but produce a

practical influence over the Church of the Circumcision. Their flight from Jerusalem, their sojourn at Pella, and the consequent interference with their accustomed worship and Christian discipline, might be expected to afford an advantage to the great enemy, and prove favourable for sowing tares amongst the wheat.

The seeds of future mischief seem to have been sown at Pella. When the Christians of Jerusalem fled from the devoted city at the commencement of that terrible war, which ended in its destruction, they found refuge in Pella; but it is scarcely probable that this small town received the whole body of believers, many of whom must have been scattered through the entire district bordering upon the Jordan. Doctor Burton observes, that "the providential escape of these men, while the rest of their countrymen were dying by thousands, must have produced a great impression upon the inhabitants of those towns; and if we

had any historical details of this interesting period, we should perhaps read of Christianity having made great progress in the country about Pella."* And we are quite prepared to expect that "the departure of the Christians from Pella, when they went to reinstate themselves in the ruins of Jerusalem, would be the cause of many imperfect converts being left behind; and the field was perhaps more open for the Gnostics when the bishop and the leading members of his Church were no longer on the spot to check their efforts."† Epiphanius, in his account of the heresies of the Hebrew-Christian Church, is decisive in asserting that they had their origin at Pella, to which place and neighbourhood they were doubtless confined for some time. In the Church of Jerusalem at least, the evil was repressed by the authority of its bishop and by the tried character and

* Burton's Lect. on Eccl. Hist. i. 346.

† Ibid. i. 354, 355.

constancy of its older members; nor have we any evidence to show that heresy was carried back to Jerusalem.

But the death of the venerable Symeon, connected, as it was, with the complete extinction of that generation of Hebrew-Christians which had grown up with him, placed the Church in new and trying circumstances. There was no longer the same extraordinary authority to interpose in the appointment of a new bishop, as when Symeon was called to that honourable office under the concurrent sanction of the apostles and brethren of our Lord, and was thus marked as the acknowledged primate of the Christian world. The Church of Jerusalem was now left, like other Churches, to the ordinary course of Church discipline and government; and in accordance with the Divine institution, of which they had already exhibited the earliest and brightest pattern, they proceeded to the appointment of

an Episcopal successor to the martyred Symeon.

Justus was their third bishop. Eusebius bears testimony to the still flourishing state of the Church at Jerusalem, and to the veneration in which the remembrance of its primitive piety, purity, and nationality, were held even in his time. He says, "Symeon having finished his life after the aforesaid manner, a certain Jew, named Justus, succeeded in the Episcopal chair at Jerusalem; there being then an innumerable company of the circumcision * (of which he was one) that believed in Christ."†

This appointment, however, was not without opposition, though we have no reason to suppose that it did not meet with the unanimous approbation of the orthodox portion of the Church. An individual named Thebuthis was an

* "Μυριων οσων εκ περιτομης εις τον Χριστον τηνικαυτα πεπιστευκοτων."

† Eusebius's Eccl. Hist. iii. 35.

aspirant to the Episcopal dignity. He had fallen into some of those Jewish heresies which were beginning to rend asunder the unity of the Church by their corrupt doctrines concerning God and his Christ.* On the failure of his attempt to obtain the Episcopate, he became the leader of an heretical party, and evidently caused some trouble to the Church, and probably some defection from the ranks of orthodox Hebrew-Christians. Heresy now began to assume a more systematic form, not only in Judea, but in other distinguished ancient Churches. The Church had, however,

* Eusebius's Eccl. Hist. iv. 22. At first sight it appears as if Eusebius meant to give it as the testimony of Hegesippus that Thebuthis was a candidate in opposition to Symeon; but his words do not necessarily imply this. The connexion of the mention of Thebuthis with the declaration of Hegesippus respecting the purity of the Church at the death of Symeon plainly shows that this is the proper place to introduce the factious conduct of that heretic.—See lib. iii. cap. 11.

strength to cast off her corrupt members, who now formed distinct bodies in open opposition to the true body of Christ. The nature and extent of the peculiar heresies that prevailed amongst the Hebrew-Christians will be considered in the next chapter.

We must naturally regret that ecclesiastical history presents us with little information of the state of the Church of Jerusalem from this time until the dissolution of the Church of the circumcision. Its condition must have been one of great trial; nationally distinguished in many respects from the Gentile Churches, it must have been compelled to stand much alone—"the daughter of Zion—as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers;" from the Heathen world it was exposed to the odium and danger of being confounded with the rebellious Jews; and it had its peculiar heresies to combat with. Yet it is evident that this Church still commanded the sympathies and respect of

the Church in general; and that its high original, its early devotedness, and its distinguished honour as the mother of all Churches, were long remembered with veneration and respect.

Eusebius informs us* that he could find no authentic record of the length of time during which the Bishops of Jerusalem severally occupied that see. After the death of Symeon they seem to have followed in rapid succession. The names, however, of thirteen have been preserved, who, like their distinguished predecessors, James and Symeon, were by birth Hebrews, who had sincerely embraced the knowledge of Christ, and who were judged worthy, by those who were then competent to judge of such matters, to be advanced to the Episcopal office.

The following is the entire list:—

1. James, the brother of our Lord;
2. Symeon;
3. Justus;

* Eusebius's Eccl. Hist. iv. cap. 5.

4. Zacchæus;
5. Tobias;
6. Benjamin;
7. John;
8. Matthias;
9. Philip;
10. Seneca;
11. Justus;
12. Levi;
13. Ephres;
14. Joseph;
15. Judas.

All these bishops were of the circumcision, and during their occupancy of the Episcopal office, the whole Church of Jerusalem, consisting of believing Israelites, adhered to their national customs, and continued steadfast in the faith of Christ. This testimony to the purity of this remarkable Church at the period of its dissolution is the more important as it evidently embodies the generally received opinion of the ancient Church of the Nicene period, when there was no pre-

judice in favour of Jewish practices or claims, and no tendency to judge too favourably of Jewish Christianity.

The repeated rebellions of the unbelieving Jews were at length the means of involving the Jewish Christian Church in the common ruin of the nation. Whilst Jerusalem stood, the "Church of the circumcision" was like a city set upon a hill, the first-fruits of the Gospel, a lively type of better days to come, a bright model of Christian faith, character, and Church government; and for a considerable period after the destruction of the city and the overthrow of the Jewish economy it continued, in faith and patience, to bear a national witness to its Lord and Master as the Messiah promised to the Jews.

This seems the proper place to notice the remarkable history of Aquila, well known for his Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. He was a native of Pontus, and originally a Gentile. He

appears to have visited Jerusalem, and there he is said by Epiphanius to have been struck with the faith and piety, as well as with the miraculous powers, especially the gifts of healing,* for which the Church of that place was then eminent. Under strong impressions he embraced the Christian religion; and after a short interval he received the seal of that profession in the ordinance of baptism. He did not, however, relinquish his former pursuits and studies, and it is said that astrology was included amongst them. When he was expostulated with by his Christian instructors, instead of yielding to their reproofs, he defended himself; and eventually was excommunicated. This measure so exasperated him, that he abjured the profession of Christianity, and became a proselyte to Judaism, which he very warmly embraced, proving himself on all occasions the bitter enemy of the

* This testimony of Epiphanius seems to be an illustration of James v. 14, 15.

Church. He applied himself to the study of the Hebrew language, and eventually translated the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek, with the view, as Epiphanius and others have alleged, of weakening the authority of the Septuagint, and of suppressing as far as possible the Scripture testimonies to the Lord Jesus Christ. In other respects both Jerome and Origen commend the accuracy of his version. Besides his skill in languages, Aquila seems to have possessed a knowledge of architecture, and to have been employed by the Emperor Adrian in superintending the new buildings of his projected city, Ælia, on the site of ancient Jerusalem.*

Previously to the erection of the new city, Adrian himself visited Jerusalem, and witnessed the desolated and ruinous condition in which it had been left by Titus. It is said that the Christians had

* See Cave's Historia Literaria, pp. 34, 35; Epiphanius de Mens. et Ponder, § 14, 15.

erected a small church on Mount Sion, near the spot where the apostles had first assembled after the ascension of our Lord.

It had been the declared punishment of the rejection of Christ, by his favoured people, that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and that the kingdom should be taken from them and given to others bringing forth the fruits thereof. It seems to have been in the fulfilment of this awful sentence, that the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem was permitted to be abruptly dissolved by the hand of violence. The Jews, groaning under their sufferings and oppressions, refused to humble themselves before God and to "accept of the punishment of their iniquity,"* and were consequently goaded to renewed acts of rebellion against their Roman masters; and they who rejected the true Messiah, were ready to follow

* Leviticus xxvi. 41.

any impostor who subsequently laid claim to the title.

The Emperor Adrian* having commenced the erection of a new town on the ancient site of Jerusalem, with buildings after a Roman fashion, introduced Greek and Roman inhabitants, and even added the wanton insult to the feelings of the Jews, of erecting a Heathen temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, on the very spot where the ancient sanctuary of God had once stood. It is highly probable that the Christian Jews at this time shared the sufferings of their unbelieving brethren; and the jealousy of the Roman governor, and the sanguinary measures which he took for suppressing rebellion, may, to a great extent, account for the later bishops of Jerusalem occupying their sees for so short a time.

But the patient endurance which the Church had learned in the school of Christ, was not imitated by the nation

* Burton's Lect. on Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. pp. 57, 58.

at large. They broke out into open revolt under Barchochebas, a man of extraordinary powers, who laid claim to the character of Messiah, and succeeded in rousing the religious and political energies of his countrymen. The first outbreak was irresistible;* great numbers of the Heathen inhabitants of Palestine were put to the sword, and amongst them many Christians were included. Justin Martyr states that he was himself obliged to fly the country on this occasion,† and that Barchochebas sentenced the Christians to horrid punishments if they would not deny that Jesus was the Christ, and utter blasphemy. The Church of Jerusalem was thus exposed to the fury of two opposite parties; and many suffered for their constancy, of whom we have no distinct record.

Bitthera, a fortified city between Je-

* Burton's Lect. on Eccl. Hist. ii. 84.

† Justin Martyr's Apol. i. 31.

rusalem and the sea, was the stronghold of the insurgents. Here the Jewish leaders stood a long siege; but the Roman arms prevailed, Barchochebas was killed, an almost incredible number of Jews perished during the war, which lasted nearly four years, and the survivors were treated with increased severity, great numbers being sold as slaves. How often and how awfully had they verified the truth of our blessed Lord's words, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."*

They were banished from the land of their fathers, and forbidden even to set foot on the country about Jerusalem, except when on the anniversary of the destruction of the city,† by Titus, they

* John v. 43.

† Eusebius's Eccl. Hist. lib. iv. c. 6. Eusebius says that Jerusalem was afterwards made a Roman city; but he states nothing inconsistent with the

were subsequently permitted to purchase a transient glimpse of the hallowed spot, and to bewail their city and temple.*

The Emperor's new town, which had probably suffered during the war, was now completed, entirely cleared of its old inhabitants, and colonized by strangers; the once honoured name of Jerusalem was suppressed, and the Roman appellation of Ælia Capitolina† was substituted.

The Hebrew-Christians were included in the Imperial interdict on account of their national adherence to the law of Moses, and were in consequence shut out from the new city. They once more

fact that the Roman buildings had been commenced long before. They were, as Valerius observes in his note on this chapter, not the result but the cause of this war.

* Tertullian Apologet. c. 16; Celsus in Origen, latter end of book 8; Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. 12.

† It continued to be called Ælia until the time of Constantine, when it recovered the ancient name of Jerusalem.

retreated to Pella, and the neighbouring parts of Peræa, where they existed for two or three centuries longer, until after the age of Constantine.

It is not uncommon to represent the Church of Jerusalem as at this time having abandoned her national distinctions at the bidding of a Heathen oppressor, with the exception of an indignant minority, who retired to Peræa. But there does not appear to be any authority for this sweeping statement. It seems much more correct to say that the ancient Hebrew-Christian Church of Jerusalem was cast out and dispersed, that the succession of St. James was at an end, and that a new Church was formed in its place from amongst the Gentile inhabitants, which was subsequently joined by individual members of the ancient Church. Mosheim states, indeed, very confidently,* that "the

* De rebus Christianorum ante Constant. sæc. ii. § xxxviii. (vol. ii. p. 193, Vidal's Translation.)

greatest part of the Christians inhabiting Palestine renounced the law of Moses, to which they had before paid obedience, and placed themselves under the guidance of a leader named Marcus, who was not a Jew but a stranger, and whom they appear to have selected for the express purpose of manifesting that they meant to have nothing in common with the Jews."

But it must be borne in mind that there were many Christians amongst the Gentile inhabitants of Palestine, and that *they* were not refused admittance into the new city. A Gentile Church was thus formed, over which Marcus was appointed bishop. The words of Eusebius entirely agree with this view. Having mentioned the adoption of the name Ælia, after the city was wholly cleared of its old inhabitants, he says, "And when there was a Church *gathered there of the nations that dwelt in it*, Marcus was the first after the bishops of the

Circumcision, who undertook the management of affairs there."* And we have a very strong intimation of the Roman origin of the Gentile Church of Jerusalem, in the fact that this Church took part with the Church of Rome against the Eastern Churches, in the celebrated dispute about the time of observing Easter.† In fact, if we consider the previous persecutions of the Roman Government, the horrid cruelties of Barchochebas, and the necessary ravages of a bloody warfare, it seems evident that the Hebrew Church must have been dispersed before any measures

* Eusebius's Eccl. Hist. iv. 6.

† Burton, i. 88, note. It is a well-known fact that the ancient British Church adopted the Eastern practice; and this has been considered sufficient evidence of its having received the Gospel from Ephesus, through the Church in Gaul. It seems equally clear, by the same mode of reasoning, that the Gentile Church of Jerusalem was a newly-gathered Church, and that its character was Roman.

were taken for the peaceable settlement of a Church at Ælia. And accordingly Mosheim very justly observes, in the long note appended to the passage quoted above, "It is indisputably certain that from the time of Adrian, there existed a Christian Church of celebrity at Ælia, and that the prelates who were commonly called Bishops of Jerusalem, were in point of fact Bishops of Ælia."

It may readily be admitted that many Christians who had once belonged to the Church of the Circumcision, worn out by persecution, deprived of the regular superintendence of a bishop from among themselves, disheartened by the awful calamities of their nation, and, it may be, distracted by the rise of heresies amongst their own body in Peræa, gradually abandoned their national distinctions, and sought admission into the Gentile Church of Ælia. Epiphanius states that these Christians, upon re-

nouncing the law of Moses, were suffered to remove from Pella to Jerusalem.*

The remnant of the venerable Church of the Circumcision continued to inhabit Peræa, where, under their original name of Nazarenes, they retained both their faith in Christ and their adherence to the Mosaic institutions. Though liable to be misunderstood by Gentile Christians, and often confounded with the Ebionite heretics which sprung up amongst themselves, they were still looked upon as brethren by the Church, and were recognised in the time of Jerome, towards the close of the fourth century, as sound in the faith.

* Epiphanius de Ponderibus et Mensuris, § xv. There is nothing contradictory to the view taken above, in the short extract from Sulpicius Severus (Hist. sæc. lib. ii. cap. xxxi.), given by Mosheim, and commented on at great length.

CHAPTER IX.

REMNANT OF THE HEBREW CHURCH.

Consequences of the Dissolution of the Hebrew Episcopate.—Retreat of the scattered Members of the Church to Pella.—Confusion of Orthodox and Heretics in the absence of Church Authority.—Causes which led many Hebrew-Christians to abandon national Distinctions.—Uncertain Application of the Terms "Nazarenes" and "Ebionites."—Neander's Remarks on the origin and meaning of "Ebionite."—Testimony of Justin Martyr to the existence of Orthodox Hebrew-Christians.—Irenæus's Account of the Ebionites.—Observations of Mosheim, &c.—Evidence of Tertullian, Origen.—Growing Prejudice against Jewish Peculiarities.

THE death of the last Hebrew Bishop of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the venerable Church over which he presided, left a very large body of Jewish believers

destitute of that apostolical constitution and government, of which they had afforded the first and purest model to the Christian world. A careful comparison of the incidental testimony afforded by ancient writers, leaves a decided conviction upon the mind, that the number of believers from the Jewish nation was up to this period still very large, and that they were to be found not only in Judea, under the immediate superintendence of the Bishop of Jerusalem, but likewise to a very great extent in other parts of the world, holding communion with the body of the Church, and regarding the mother Church in Jerusalem as a great centre of unity, and maintaining with it that national bond of affection and interest, which would not fail to diffuse a measure of strength and encouragement amongst the scattered Christian members of the Jewish nation. The dissolution of that bond by the banish-

ment of the Hebrew Church from its proper locality and the cessation of its native bishops, left the Jewish converts throughout the world very much like sheep having no shepherd.

It seems clear that the banished Church retreated to Pella, but by no means under the same circumstances as when by the Saviour's directions they retired thither with Symeon, their venerable bishop, to escape the vengeance about to fall upon Jerusalem. We know nothing of their Church order or discipline, at this latter period. Jerusalem was in other hands. A Gentile Church and bishop were established on that much-loved and venerated spot; and whilst the children of Zion retained any national vestige of their descent, they were forbidden to approach the place of their nativity and the scene of their earliest privileges. It was only upon their renouncing the law of Moses that they were

permitted to remove from Pella to Jerusalem; and they who thus purchased the privilege, at the sacrifice of their nationality, would naturally be regarded in an unfavourable light by those who zealously maintained it.

Many circumstances thus concurred to render the situation of Jewish Christians peculiarly painful and injurious. The unmitigated hostility of the Jewish nation to the Christian faith, and their bitterness in exciting Heathen persecution against its professors, when they themselves had lost the power to persecute, had rendered them obnoxious to the great body of Gentile Christians, and weakened the faith of the Church in the Scripture promises of Jewish restoration and conversion; whilst the pride of Gentile philosophy, which too soon began to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel, looked down with disdain upon the ruined fabric of Mosaical institutions, and laughed to scorn the forlorn hopes

of the Jews. Thus Jewish Christians were not understood, and their views and doctrines were not appreciated. Few were fairly qualified to judge of their real character and profession. They were, like their fellow-Christians in general, open to the inroads of heresy; and no settled Church remained to unfurl the standard of orthodoxy, and thus to serve as a landmark to the Christian Israelite, and an accredited voucher to the Church at large for the continued maintenance of a pure and catholic faith.

Thus all Jewish Christians were confounded together, however opposite their actual sentiments might be. In reference to this very case, Doctor Neander remarks, "We often find it the case in the history of sects, that people describe under one common name sects which are really different, but agree with one another in some points, without remarking the points of difference between them; so that they attribute to all these

sects what may justly be said only of one or other of them."*

There is also another circumstance which we may well suppose would prove injurious to those Christians of Hebrew descent who still maintained their national distinction. The final overthrow of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews as a nation, and their entire banishment from their own land, would produce a striking effect upon Jewish converts in general. The city of Jerusalem, and the existence of divinely instituted ordinances in the temple there, had been regarded as a bond of union, and had preserved the feelings of nationality in many Christian Jewish communities, which had grown up in foreign lands, and the majority of whose members had, perhaps, never in their lives trod the hill of Zion, or witnessed the enthusiasm of the Holy City on the occasion of its grand festivals. But when Jerusalem was gone,

* Neander's Eccl. Hist. Rose's Transl. vol. ii. p. 8.

and the national ritual practically abolished, the great tie was broken. They had no communion with their unbelieving brethren, and their national customs would gradually give way, in the growing frequency of their intercourse with Gentile Christians. Their sufferings from their own countrymen, would naturally dispose them to view without regret the diminution of a national influence which, while it lasted, was so malignantly exercised against themselves; whilst the association of the national hopes with national depravity, and the assertion of a claim to the covenant and promise of God, in the midst of party strife, rebellion, religious formality, and hypocrisy, would produce a reaction in the minds of converts to Christianity, and prepare them to question altogether the scriptural validity of an expectation mixed up with so much iniquity and requited by such signal vengeance. We thus account, in some measure, for the

fact that it was so soon forgotten by a great mass of Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, in the early ages, notwithstanding the emphatic warning of St. Paul, that whatever may have been the wickedness of the Jewish nation, and however severe the just judgments of God upon them, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."* It is common to say that Judaizing Christians rapidly decreased in number about this period. It would perhaps be more correct to say that Jewish Christians rapidly fell off from their national observances, and were soon lost in the mass of the Gentile community. They who had thus abandoned all Jewish distinctions, would be very apt to speak slightingly of those who still adhered to them. They would be very likely to reject the term "Nazarenes," as applied to themselves, and to use it as a term of reproach to those who

* Rom. xi. 29.

adhered to the primitive practice of the Hebrew Church.*

Under all these difficulties there seems to be no reasonable doubt that many sincere Jewish Christians were distrusted and shunned by the great body of the Church, and forced into an apparent separation from it, whose only peculiarity was the preservation of their nationality; and hence it is, that we are compelled to collect the scattered notices which are left us of Hebrew Christianity for nearly three centuries after the dispersion of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem, chiefly under the heretical designations of Nazarenes and Ebionites. But we find from Scripture itself, that Christians in general were called by the Jews, "the sect of the Nazarenes;" and until the time of Epiphanius,† in the fourth century, there

* See Dr. Burton's Lect. on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 350.

† Epiphanius is the earliest writer who classes the Nazarenes amongst heretics.

is no evidence that this appellation implied anything heretical. And although there was undoubtedly an heretical sect known by the name of "Ebionites," yet it appears certain, that after the time of Irenæus it was usual to distinguish by this title all those Christians of Jewish descent who adhered to such of their national observances as were within their power, after the destruction of the temple; for to allege in general terms their observance of the ceremonial law, is manifestly incorrect, if it is considered how small a portion of it remained practicable.

The origin of the name of "Ebionite" is by no means clear from ancient writers, who, in their ignorance on the subject, gave their own conjectures in place of historical testimony. Doctor Neander has the following observations upon this subject. He says, "In regard to the derivation of the name, Tertullian is the first who makes mention of a founder

called Ebion, and others have followed him in this account. Better informed writers, such as Irenæus and Origen, know of no such person; and it is clear that the invention of such a person only arose from the not understanding the name of Ebionite. Origen gives us the proper derivation of the term, namely, from the Hebrew אֶבְיוֹן (Ebion) poor; but the meaning which we find attributed to the word by him, that is to say, as containing a reference to the poverty of their religious conceptions and of their faith, cannot possibly be the original meaning of the term, for they themselves gave their own sect this name, and they clearly would not have set themselves a name which would be a reproach to them. But even if we grant that this name was given them by others, and by such as were of sentiments hostile to their sect, who were the persons who would have branded them with this name understood in this sense? Could it be

Christians of Heathen descent? These might indeed have applied the name to them in this very signification; but then we can hardly imagine that they would have chosen an Hebrew name. Or was it the Jews, who were angry at Christianity in general? This might be possible, if we modify in some degree the notion of poverty of thought, after the idea of a very acute inquirer, who has recently distinguished himself in this walk of knowledge, and if, putting the word into the mouth of those Jews who expected a Messiah to come in visible glory, we imagine them to designate by this name the faith in a poor and crucified Messiah. And yet this meaning, taken by itself, does not appear to be the simplest or most natural; for even this learned writer himself connects this meaning with one we are about to mention. If we follow the interpretation of the name which we find in the later Ebionites of Epiphanius, it originally

denoted a class of poor men. This may have been applied to them either as consisting of poor persons of the lower orders, whom none of the rich and the learned had joined (see John vii. 49), a reproach which the Heathens made to the Christians, and which the proud and the wise in their own opinion have constantly made to the disciples of simple truth; or they may have been persons who had voluntarily renounced all earthly property, and voluntarily given up all their earth's wealth, in order that they might devote their whole life to Divine things; and in this case we should be reminded of a similar name in the case of later sects. The latter idea corresponds the most nearly with the explanation given by the later Ebionites themselves in Epiphanius; for they appealed to the conduct of their ancestors in laying down all their goods at the feet of the apostles. In truth, however, this is no decisive proof, for we may certainly imagine it

possible that these later Ebionites had introduced a meaning into the term which was foreign to its original sense. According to either of these explanations this appellation may have been originally a general name of the Christians in Jerusalem, or it may have been from the very beginning the name of a certain ascetic sect among the Jewish Christians, which the Church teachers afterwards extended by mistake to all Judaizing Christians. Such an appellation, in such a sense, suits admirably the spirit of the ascetic Ebionites, who paint themselves to us in the apocryphal book called the Clementines; for in that book—according to the contrast between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, which they misunderstood (as if the whole earthly world not merely in regard to its sinful misuse, but of itself and by its very nature, necessarily belonged to Satan)—in this book we find it required of those who wish to belong to the kingdom of God,

that they should renounce as far as possible all possessions in a world which was none of theirs, but which belonged to Satan; that they should possess nothing but what was absolutely necessary to their bare subsistence; that they should only possess bread, water, and one garb, and even these necessaries of life they should obtain by the sweat of their brow."*

In this last-mentioned peculiarity we find an evident attempt to follow the strict practice of the apostolic age, and to imitate the character of the first Christians of the Church, from which they sprung. In short, that there were very different opinions held under this common title of Ebionite, is evident from the descriptions† of Origen and Epiphanius. They were accused of too curious an attempt to expound the prophecies,‡ and

* Neander's Eccl. Hist. Rose's Transl. vol. ii. pp. 9—11.

† Ibid. i. p. 13. ‡ Irenæus, lib. i. cap. 26.

the real heretics probably fell into rabbinical subtleties; yet this general accusation will weigh but little with those who consider the fanciful principles of interpretation introduced by Origen, and which obtained currency under the sanction of his name. And if there were amongst the Jewish converts those who carried their zeal for national distinctions so far as to refuse to have any intercourse with Gentile Christians, it must be remembered, on the other hand, that there were also Gentile Christians equally deficient in Christian spirit, and mistaken as to the true bond of Christian communion—that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek.

Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, says, "There are persons who will have no intercourse with those who observe the ceremonial law, and will not share the hearth with them, and say that they cannot be saved. I do not agree with these persons; but if the others,

from weakness of persuasion, wish to observe, as far as they can, even those laws of Moses which we think were given on account of the hardness of man's heart; if they will only, at the same time, rest their hope on Christ, and do that which is lawful and holy by its own nature and by eternal laws, and have no hesitation in living with other Christians without endeavouring to compel them also to the observance of these things, then, we say *that such persons are to be looked upon as our brethren in all respects*. But if those from among your people (the Jews), who say that they believe in Christ, compel those of the Heathen, who embrace the faith in this same Christ, to live entirely according to the law laid down by Moses, or else decline all intercourse with them, then I cannot approve of such persons at all." *

* Neander's Eccl. Hist. Rose's Transl. vol. ii. 8; Justin Martyr, Ed. Colon. p. 200.

It is evident from this extract that there was a body of believing Israelites in the time of Justin Martyr, who not only practised circumcision as the national sign and seal of the Gospel covenant with Abraham,* but who likewise, with various degrees of strictness, observed *as far as they could*, the laws of Moses, and who, at the same time, rested on Christ alone for salvation, recognized the liberty of the Gentiles, and were acknowledged by the Church as brethren in all respects.

That fearful heresies sprung up in the smaller section of the Christian Church composed of Jewish converts, as well as in the larger or Gentile part of it, has been already noticed; and that the loss of their ecclesiastical polity as a distinct Church both deprived the Hebrews of an orthodox faith, of the legitimate means of distinguishing the faithful from the false brethren, the

* See Romans iv. 11.

sound from the unsound members, and likewise tended to produce confusion and uncertainty in the estimate formed by the Gentile Churches of the real character and professions of their Jewish brethren in Christ.

In considering the testimony of Justin Martyr, it is important to remember that it was given a few years after the dissolution of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem, and that he had opportunities of acquaintance with Jewish Christians, having lived in Palestine, from which he was obliged to retire in consequence of the cruelties of Barchochebas and the Jewish rebellion, a circumstance highly calculated to prejudice him against all the peculiarities of that nation.

The evidence of Irenæus requires, perhaps, further attention. The only notice which he takes of Jewish Christians is that which is implied in the short account he gives of the Ebionite heresy.

He had little opportunity for personal knowledge on this subject, having been early removed from the East to the Church at Lyons, of which he was subsequently bishop. It is important to remember that he makes no mention whatever of the Nazarenes as heretics; and we may conclude that in his time, at all events, towards the close of the second century, they were not known to the Church as such. Of the Ebionites he says, "Those who are called Ebionites agree indeed that the world was made by God; but on those points which have reference to our Lord, they do not hold the same sentiments as Cerinthus and Carpocrates. They use only the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and reject the Apostle Paul, calling him an apostate from the law. On the subject of prophecy, they adopt a fanciful interpretation; they practise circumcision, and persevere in those customs which are according to the law; they follow a

Jewish mode of life, and worship Jerusalem as if it were the house of God."*

In this short passage we have no definite account of that which, in truth, afterwards constituted the most serious feature of the Ebionite heresy, namely—the denial of our Lord's Divinity. The main point established by Irenæus, is the extravagant extent to which they carried their adherence to Jewish customs; but whether we can infer from his words, as Mosheim supposes, that they enforced the oral law in addition to the written law of Moses, is not perhaps so clear. On the last point mentioned by Irenæus, Mosheim justly

* Irenæus, lib. i. cap. xxvi. Some learned writers propose to leave out the negative "non," or to read "consimiliter" for "non similiter," in the sentence referring to Cerinthus and Carpocrates: but the Benedictine editor of Irenæus defends the usual reading, and shows, from other testimony, that the Ebionites did actually differ from these two heresiarchs.

remarks, "What Irenæus adds of their having worshipped the City of Jerusalem, as the immediate residence of the Deity, I consider as indisputably false and injurious. For it was never held lawful by the Jews to worship, even in the slightest degree, anything except the one true and living God. What gave occasion to this calumny was, their custom of turning always towards the site of Jerusalem when they offered up their prayers. Prior to the war of Adrian, there can be no doubt but that the Jews were accustomed to resort, for the purpose of prayer, to the spot whereon the temple had formerly stood,* in order

* This truly venerable and affecting custom exists at this day, and has of late years been brought under the notice of the Church in the journals of missionary labours amongst the Jews. The following extract from Doctor Robinson's "Biblical Researches in Palestine," with reference to this custom, will not be out of place:—"I went with Mr. Lanneau to the place where the Jews are permitted to purchase the right of approaching the

that they might conform themselves, as far as possible, to the custom of their

site of their temple, and of praying and wailing over its ruins and the downfall of their nation. The spot is on the western exterior of the area of the great mosque, considerably south of the middle, and is approached only by a narrow, crooked lane, which there terminates at the wall in a very small open place. The lower part of the wall is here composed of the same kind of ancient stones which we had before seen on the eastern side. Two old men, Jews, sat there upon the ground, reading together in a book of Hebrew prayers. On Fridays they assemble here in greater numbers. It is the nearest point in which they can venture to approach their ancient temple; and, fortunately for them, it is sheltered from observation by the narrowness of the lane and the dead walls around. Here, bowed in the dust, they may at least weep undisturbed over the fallen glory of their race, and bedew with their tears the soil which so many thousands of their forefathers once moistened with their blood. This touching custom of the Jews is not of modern origin. Benjamin, of Tudela, mentions it, as connected apparently with the same spot, in the twelfth century; and very probably the custom has come down from still earlier ages. After the capture of Jerusalem under Adrian, the Jews were excluded from the city; and it was not till the age of Con-

forefathers, and the annual religious discipline of their nation. But even this miserable consolation was wrested from them by Adrian, who, by a severe edict, forbade any Jews to approach Jerusalem, and surrounded the whole area of the temple and the Holy City with a military guard. Nothing more was left then to this afflicted people, so

stantine that they were permitted to approach so as to behold Jerusalem from the neighbouring hills. At length they were allowed to enter the city once a-year, on the day on which it was taken by Titus, in order to wail over the ruins of the temple. But this privilege they were obliged to purchase of the Roman soldiers."—Vol. i. p. 349.

In a note, Doctor Robinson gives the following quotation from Jerome on Zephaniah i. 15:— "They purchase with money the permission to weep over the ruins of their city; and they who once bought the blood of Christ, now buy their own tears. And that their very weeping may not be without cost, you might behold, when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by the Romans, a mourning people approaching . . . . to bewail the ruins of their temple; and the soldier demands their money as the price of an additional tear."

fondly attached to the practices of their ancestors, than when engaged in prayer to turn their faces towards the spot where once had stood their city and their temple."*

After all it must be remembered that Irenæus himself, in common, there is reason to believe, with the generality of Christians in his day, expected a literal restoration of Jerusalem and a literal fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, that his seed should enjoy his inheritance from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates. But he seems, whilst literally interpreting the promise of the land and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, to have too much lost sight of the natural posterity of Abraham, and to have put the Church, the spiritual children of Abraham, altogether in their place.† The

* Mosheim de reb. Christ. sæc. ii., § 40, note. (Vidal, vol. ii. p. 205.)

† See Beaven's Account of Irenæus, chap. xviii. pp. 250—256, where the passages are quoted at length.

character and condition of the Jewish nation at that time made it hard to believe that "God is able to graff *them* in again." The assertion of their national claim to the promises by Christian Israelites was therefore at this early period regarded with prejudice and aversion by the Church.

The testimony of Tertullian may be considered as properly following that of Irenæus. He alludes to a superstitious regard for the Jewish law as a source of heresy, and having stated that St. Paul inveighs in his Epistle to the Galatians against the observers and defenders of the law, he says, that this was the heresy of Ebion. He mentions the low and unworthy views of the nature of Christ as held by this sect;* but we cannot necessarily infer from his silence respecting them that the number of orthodox Christians observing Mosaical ordinances was insignificant; as his residence, whether at

* Tertullian de Præscript. Hæretic. c. 33.

Rome or Carthage, gave him no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the state of religion in the remoter parts of Palestine. It appears that in his time the Jews were accustomed to apply the term "Nazarenes" to all Christians generally.*

Origen distinguishes the Ebionites of his time into two parties, one acknowledging the miraculous birth of our Saviour, the other denying it; and he speaks of both as living like Jews. He mentions that they believed that Christ came chiefly for the sake of those who were Israelites after the flesh; and he thinks that St. John points at this error, when he says, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours" (that is, of us Jews) "only, but also for the sins of the whole world." †

* See Bishop Kaye's Eccles. Hist. illustrated from the writings of Tertullian, p. 474, &c.

† See Dr. Burton's Bampton Lectures on "The Heresies of the Apostolic Age," Lect. vi., with the notes on it, in which all the references are given. See also Buddeus, Ecclesia Apostolica, p. 517.

It is unnecessary to quote from other ancient writers, whose evidence is much to the same purpose. In general they concur in the same charges against the Ebionites, who were justly branded as heretics by the Catholic Church on account of their defective views of the Divinity of Christ, a blessed doctrine which the Church in the earliest and all subsequent ages, has firmly held to be an essential and fundamental truth of Christianity. But it is not difficult to conceive that many were classed amongst heretics merely from their adherence to the national customs of the Jews. This peculiarity was external and apparent, and was often doubtless considered to afford grounds enough for the imputation of every error that had appeared amongst Jewish-Christians. The Church grew more and more intolerant of Jewish distinctions, and it soon came to be considered a strong mark of heresy to observe the Sabbath with the Jews, and the

Lord's-day with Christians. These sects, at first exclusively Jewish, at no distant period probably were joined by Gentiles; and the New Testament proves that then it was that Jewish observances became really dangerous and even fatal. Hence it is that we find Judaizing error denounced most powerfully in the Epistles to the Gentile Churches of Galatia and Colosse; whilst we have little or no direct reference to it in those which are especially addressed to Hebrew believers.

The consideration of the state of the scattered remnant of the Hebrew-Christians, in the fourth century, will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

THE HEBREW CHRISTIANS OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

Epiphanius and Jerome the chief source of Information.—Account of Epiphanius.—Nazarenes first ranked amongst Heretics by him.—His Distinction of Jewish and Christian Nazarenes.—His account of them examined.—Animadversions of Petavius.—Description of the Ebionites by Epiphanius.—His Intercourse with Jewish Converts.—Remarkable testimony of Jerome. Le Quien's Dissertation on this subject.—General conclusions.

In the former chapter I have endeavoured to collect some of the scattered notices of the remnant of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem from the more eminent Fathers of the second and third centuries. The

fourth century seems to afford somewhat more copious materials, scanty, indeed, at best, for the prosecution of our inquiries, than the one immediately before it. And of course, any testimony that can be procured from the records of the fourth century must be applicable to the preceding period, and will afford a valuable illustration of earlier notices otherwise imperfect.

Our information as to the state of the Hebrew-Christians is derived chiefly from the writings of Epiphanius and Jerome, and is the more important, as from the very nature of their writings, the subject is presented to us from two opposite points of view. We will commence with Epiphanius. He became bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, about the year 368, and lived to the end of the century. In the interval he composed and published the works which bear his name. Jerome speaks of him in terms of high commendation, and says that he understood Greek, Syriac,

Hebrew, Egyptian, and had some knowledge of Latin. He is often spoken of as a writer on whom no great dependence can be placed; and it must be confessed that his reasoning is often very inconclusive and even trifling. He is nevertheless a valuable author to the ecclesiastical student, having preserved many of the current traditions of the day, and compiled his works from documents not now extant. I do not know that his veracity can be questioned; and he is the more important as a witness in our present subject as having spent some time in Palestine.

Epiphanius is the earliest writer who distinctly classes the Nazarenes amongst the heretics. His principal work professes to contain the history, character, and refutation of eighty heresies, which arose partly amongst the Jews before Christ, but chiefly amongst Christians afterwards. He mentions two classes of Nazarene heretics, one amongst the Jews before Christ, and the other amongst the

Jewish-Christians.* The most remarkable feature in his description of the character of the Jewish Nazarenes is, that they rejected the Pentateuch, and accounted it unlawful to offer sacrifices, whilst they acknowledged Moses, and conformed to other Jewish ceremonies. This would indeed have been to overturn Judaism in its stronghold, as Petavius observes; and hence, he suspects that Epiphanius refers to the Nazarites, though he has given a strange account of them, not to be found in any other author.† After this we are scarcely prepared to expect any great accuracy in the accounts which this author has given us of the Hebrew-

* Epiphanius adversus Hæreses. Lib. i. tom. i. Hær. xviii. and xxix. He calls the Jewish heretics Νασαραιοι, and the Christian heretics Ναζωραιοι.

† Petavii Animadversiones in Epiphan. ad Hær. xviii. Philastrius reckons the heresy of the Nazarenes amongst Jewish sects; but, he says, that they received the Law and the Prophets, and imputes no peculiar customs to them, except those of the ancient Nazarites. Petavius justly observes, that they ought not to be classed amongst heretics.

Christian heresies; and may illustrate the incompetence of most of the Gentile-Christian Fathers to treat of the peculiarities of the Jewish nation, with which they could obtain little acquaintance except from uncertain or prejudiced sources.

In treating of the heresy of the Nazarenes as a Jewish-Christian sect, Epiphanius commences by attempting to show that the prophecy, that Christ should sit upon the throne of his father David had already been fulfilled. "For," he says, "this is thought by some not to have been fulfilled." After stating that the throne and royal seat of David * is the priesthood of the Catholic Church, which royal and pontifical dignity the Lord hath united and bestowed upon his holy

* *Θρονος γαρ Δαβιδ και βασιλικη εδρα εστιν η εν τη αγια Εκκλησια Ιερωσυνη, οπερ αξιωμα βασιλικον τε και αρχιερατικον ομου επι τοιαυτα συναψας, ο Κυριος δεδωρηται τη αγια αυτου Εκκλησια τον θρονον μεταγαγων εν αυτη τον του Δαβιδ μη διαλειποντα εις τον αιωνα.*—Epiph. lib. i. tom. ii. Hær. xxix. 3.

Church, he proceeds to the proof of his position in a very singular manner. He asserts that Judea was governed by kings of the house of David until the time of Christ's birth, and that they terminated in the person of Alexander, in whom the royal and sacerdotal lines of succession were united in consequence of his lineal descent from David and from Aaron. The accession of Herod to the throne broke the order of succession, which henceforth devolved upon our Lord as an eternal kingdom and priesthood. He then attempts to show that the succession to both devolved upon St. James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, both by right of lineal descent, as the son of Joseph (as Epiphanius supposes), and by virtue of our Lord's authoritative appointment. His whole hypothesis, it is almost needless to say, involves the most glaring anachronisms, as well as a complete ignorance of the facts of history. His editor, Petavius, very fully exposes the errors and inaccuracies

on which his arguments

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s way to overturn the
the Nazarenes, who looked
re and more complete fulfil-
of the promises to Abraham, to
id, and to Christ himself. His argumentation on this point is confessedly weak, and not likely to create in the mind of an intelligent reader any strong conviction of the heretical character of the Nazarenes against whom it is directed.

He allows that all Christians were originally called Nazarenes, and yet he warmly charges this sect with omitting the name of Jesus, and not calling themselves Jessæans;† they do not retain

* Dionysii Petavii Animadversiones ad Hær. xxix.

† The Jesuit, Petavius, though very angry with Protestant writers for finding so many blunders in this single account of the Nazarenes, and especially in his adoption and derivation of the term

their proper title of Jews, nor do they style themselves Christians, but adhere to the name of Nazarenes; although, says he, they are in all respects Jews, and nothing else. He goes on to say that they use not only the New Testament, but likewise the Old, just as the Jews do; for they read the books of the law, the prophets, and the Hagiographa, and all the rest, exactly as the Jews receive the Bible. So that in nothing do they differ, *except that they believe in Christ.* They believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in the creation of all things by God; they acknowledge one God, and Jesus Christ his Son; they are very skilful in the Hebrew language, and read all the books of the Old Testament in Hebrew as the Jews do. In one respect they differ as much from Jews as from Christians—

"Jessæans," makes but a feeble defence, and observes, that he does not think that the name was ever applied to Christians.

from Jews, inasmuch as they believe in Christ; and from Christians, by their submission to Jewish rites, such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and the rest. On the really vital point of the nature of Christ, Epiphanius very honestly confesses his entire ignorance, as he is not able to say whether, with Cerinthus and Merinthus, they regard him as a man only, or, in conformity with the true doctrine, they fully believe that he was born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost. On this most important article of the creed, he had evidently no ground to accuse them of heresy. He adds, that this heresy chiefly flourished in the City of Beræa, about Cæle Syria, in Decapolis, about Pella, and in Basanitis; and that it took its rise from the time of the retirement of the Christians from Jerusalem, before the destruction of the city. In his confutation of their alleged heresy, his arguments are really applicable to the unbelieving Jews on the

one hand, and on the other, to Judaizing Christians, that is, to such, as like the Galatian Church, voluntarily took upon themselves Mosaical obligations, as necessary or conducive to eternal salvation; but neither the decree of the Church of Jerusalem respecting Gentile liberty, (Acts xv.) nor St. Paul's strong assertion to the Galatians, that if they were circumcised Christ would profit them nothing, were in truth applicable to those, who on our author's own showing, merely followed the venerable example of the first and purest of Apostolic Churches in maintaining their national distinction, though now indeed under very different circumstances.

It is evident from his whole account, that Epiphanius was perplexed with the circumstances and profession of the Nazarenes. He gave the best account he could, and with much evident simplicity; but he neither understood their position nor their principles. At the end of his

dissertations on the Nazarenes he recurs to the assertion that they are Jews, and nothing else; but still, he states as an unaccountable fact, that they are most obnoxious to the Jews, who not only thoroughly hate them, but solemnly curse them three times a-day in their synagogues. He adds, that they have the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew, but that he does not know whether they reject the genealogy of Christ or not.

It appears to me that it is impossible to rise from a careful examination of this account of the Nazarenes of the fourth century, notwithstanding a few hard words which Epiphanius bestows upon them, without arriving at the conviction that this singular sect, so hated and cursed by the Jews, and so much reprobated and despised by Gentile-Christians, was the forlorn and neglected offspring of the once distinguished Church of St. James at Jerusalem; and that it really consisted in the main of orthodox Chris-

tians, driven by their peculiar circumstances into an involuntary and apparent schism, but not into actual heresy on any great point of Christian doctrine. Epiphanius was probably altogether personally ignorant of their character and tenets; and his account embodies the prevailing prejudices of his day. But the distinction made between the Nazarenes and Ebionites sufficiently shows that it was notorious that there were two very obviously distinct parties amongst the descendants of ancient Hebrew-Christians. The general feeling of the best writers on this subject is, that the Nazarenes were not heretics in the usual sense of the term. But the rancour and bitterness of their own nation; the degradation of their country; the influence of Heathen philosophy on the system of scriptural interpretation; the growing prejudices of Gentile-Christians; the spirit of mutual irritation; and a disposition, not improbable on the part of the Nazarenes, to

assert their national claims, which their depressed circumstances would not only render more prominent, but also more offensive to their Gentile neighbours; these and other causes have concurred doubtless to effect their gradual separation from the communion of the Catholic Church. It is not meant to assert that they are to be compared with their own Church in its better days, or that great errors had not crept in amongst them. It may be conceded that they were in a state of manifest imperfection in faith, practice, and Church fellowship; they were labouring under peculiar disadvantages; but there was amongst them a faithful remnant of the once flourishing "Church of the Circumcision;" they were the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with their fathers; they were the representatives of those *to whom first*, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless them,

in turning away every one of them from his iniquities.*

Epiphanius gives a much more diffuse account of the Ebionites than he does of the Nazarenes; but it is the less necessary to enter at large upon this subject, as my object is not to prove that no heresy existed among the remnant of the Jewish converts. That the name "Ebionite" was ignorantly and indiscriminately applied at some periods and by some writers, seems generally acknowledged; but it is of less importance to notice it, when we have a clear distinction made between the "Nazarenes" and "Ebionites," as in the author under examination. He notices a variety of opinions entertained by the Ebionites,

* See Acts iii. 25, 26. Petavius quotes the testimony of Augustine, who describes the Nazarenes as those "who, whilst they confessed Christ to be the Son of God, at the same time observed the precepts of the old law." D. Petavii Animad. ad Hær. Nazar. p. 50.

but seems to confound them with the Sampseni, the Ossini, and the Elcessæi, who introduced the later and more subtle distinctions. There appears at least to have been every shade of error below the orthodox standard of belief in the Divinity of our Lord; and whilst some believed him a mere man, others confessed his pre-existence, and that he appeared in bodily form to the patriarchs. They abstained from animal food, and in the Lord's Supper used unleavened bread, and water only instead of wine. They asserted that the devil had the chief power in this world, and that Christ would have it in the world to come. They had their own apocryphal books, and many spurious narratives of the apostles and others. They were great opposers of celibacy, and, according to Epiphanius, sanctioned general profligacy of conduct; but this last assertion is not borne out by the testimony of other writers.*

* "I know of no writer except Epiphanius who

They rejected the prophets, and only partially adopted the Pentateuch.

These are some of the main features of this heresy; and it is clear that Epiphanius occasionally confounds different sects, or, at all events, that the name of Ebionite was no longer confined to those of Jewish descent, as it might have been in the first instance. He says, that they were more of Samaritans than Jews, and were numerous at Rome and the west, as well as in the countries bordering on Palestine. Their origin is ascribed to the retreat of the Christian-Israelites to Pella.

In the course of his treatise on the "Ebionites," Epiphanius has one or two interesting allusions to the existence of Jewish converts, and to the spirit of inquiry and secret conviction of the truths of Christianity occasionally to be found in the celebrated rabbinical school of

speaks of the profligacy of the Ebionites."—Burton's Bampton Lectures, lect. vi. p. 184, note.

Tiberias. He says, that besides the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew, it was asserted by many, that a Hebrew translation of the Gospel according to St. John existed in the Jewish treasury at Tiberias, and that it was kept there with great secrecy; and that he had this information from some who had embraced the faith of Christ from amongst the Jews. Perhaps these persons had abandoned their Jewish customs, or, at all events, personal intercourse had removed his prejudices, as he speaks of them without any mark of disapprobation. He adds, that it was even said that a translation of the Acts of the Apostles into Hebrew was to be found in the same place, and that the Jews who informed him of it were first led to embrace Christianity from the perusal of those very books.*

He also mentions an account, which he had received from an aged and very dis-

* Epiphanius adv. Hær. lib. i. tom. i. c. xxx. § 3.

tinguished Jewish convert, of the baptism of a former Chief Rabbi (or Patriarch, as he calls him) of Tiberias, whose name was Ellel or Hillel. This man, he says, was a descendant of the celebrated Gamaliel. When on the point of death he sent for the neighbouring bishop of Tiberias, and earnestly requested Christian baptism. The bishop, it appears, was introduced as a physician, in order to escape the observation of the Rabbi's Jewish attendants, who would doubtless have hindered him from carrying his purpose into effect. In this way, the bishop, having succeeded in obtaining a private interview, administered the sacrament of baptism to the dying Israelite, and thus received him into the fold of Christ. The informant of Epiphanius was at that time a young rabbinical student in attendance on the chief rabbi, and from motives of curiosity was led to watch the proceedings of the supposed physician through the joints of the door.

He was much surprised, and a deep impression was made on his mind by what he witnessed, especially when he saw the rabbi present to the bishop a great quantity of gold, saying, "Offer this for me." On this the attendants returned into the apartment, and to their inquiries the sick man replied that he was the better for the remedy. The bishop visited him several times, at short intervals, in the quality of a physician; and at last he died in peace, leaving a son to succeed him, who being very young was placed under the guardianship of Epiphanius's friend and informant, whose name was Joseph, and another. After the death of the rabbi, Joseph's attention was drawn to one of the little cells or compartments of the treasury which was sealed, and he was tempted to open it secretly, in the hope of finding a large sum of money there. In this he was disappointed, as it contained nothing but books. On looking them over, he found the Gospel of St. John and the

Acts of the Apostles in Hebrew, with the Hebrew genealogy of St. Matthew. Having read them through, and remembering what he had previously witnessed, his mind was greatly agitated, though his aversion to Christianity was unconquered, and he continued for some time to resist strong convictions. Many remarkable occurrences are related, quite in accordance with the character of the times; he was eventually baptized, and being afterwards introduced to the notice of Constantine, he received some marks of distinction from that Christian emperor, and was employed by him at his own request in the erection of churches in the towns of Palestine. He finally settled in Scythopolis, where he protected the orthodox Christians against Arian oppression, and received into his house an Italian bishop who had been banished by Constantius for his steadfast adherence to the Nicene Confession of Faith. At this time, when he was about seventy years of

age, Epiphanius and other brethren visited the country, and being received into his house with great hospitality, they learned from him the particulars which Epiphanius has recorded. One fact mentioned by him must not be omitted. Joseph related that whilst he was still undetermined about Christianity and greatly distracted in his mind, he was seized with a dangerous illness, and when his Jewish relatives thought that his end was near, one of the elders, a student of the law, whispered in his ear, "Believe that Jesus the Son of God was crucified under Pontius Pilate . . . . and that he will come again to judge the dead and the living." Epiphanius remarks, with reference to this incident, which he understood from Joseph not to be a solitary instance of the kind, that he relates it accurately as communicated to him; and "indeed," he says, "I once heard the very same thing from another person." He accordingly mentions that

in a tour which he himself once made from Jericho through the country of Bethel and Ephraim to the mountains, he was accompanied by a Jew. During their journey Epiphanius advanced several things concerning the coming of Christ, to which his companion made no objection whatever. Being surprised at this, as he knew that the man was well versed in Jewish learning, and very ready in controversy, he asked him why he made no reply, but, on the contrary, seemed to assent to all that he said concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. The man replied, that once, when he was apparently on the point of death, he heard a whisper in his ear from some of those about him, that "Jesus Christ who was crucified, the Son of God, will hereafter judge thee."*

* See Epiphanius adv. Hær. lib. i. tom. i. cap. xxx. § 4—12. This interesting digression respecting Jewish converts occupies nine sections, under the head of the Ebionite Heresy, and, as Epiphanius remarks, arose out of the reference to the Hebrew Gospels, &c., used by the Ebionites. He

It is clear that, in personal intercourse, Epiphanius learned to entertain different views of Jewish-Christians from those which he derived through the channels of controversy or popular prejudice. It is impossible to read his account without perceiving that the Bishop of Cyprus took a warm interest in the conversion of the Jews, and that it did his own heart good to hear of the merciful dealings of God in revealing Christ as a Saviour to some of his ancient people. Casaubon questions the truth of some of these narratives, and charges Epiphanius with too great credulity; but there is much force in the observation of Petavius on his strictures: —"What reason is there that we should not suppose that many amongst the Jews were thus persuaded concerning Christ?"

does not, however, say, that the Gospels found in the library at Tiberias were the mutilated and spurious documents since ascribed to the Ebionites. It is tolerably evident that they were translations of the authentic Gospels.

I see no substantial ground for rejecting the narratives, which are given with great simplicity by Epiphanius on the authority of very respectable parties with whom he was intimately acquainted. There are some facts mentioned which would scarcely be understood or appreciated in the present day, but which are perfectly consistent with what we know to have been the practices and habits of life of the early part of the fourth century. There are one or two incidents bordering upon the supernatural, which, to say the least, no more destroy the credit of the general story, than similar incidents in the life of Luther affect our confidence in his veracity. It ought also to be mentioned that the making the sign of the cross is connected with a remarkable deliverance from temptation, which, of course, leads genuine Papists to exult in the testimony here borne to the wonderful effect of the mere act of making the sign of the cross, and compels indiscri-

minating Protestants to reject the whole narrative in which it is introduced. Neither are justified in their conclusion. The sign of the cross was then a frequent token of a Christian man or woman's profession; and, when made in the presence of an unconverted Jew or Gentile, or as a testimony against open sin, or the wilful seduction to it, it must have had a very different effect, and indicated a very different spirit from the mechanical and heartless crossings prescribed and numbered by the Romish ritual of modern days. The sign of the cross by a Christian female, in the instance recorded by Epiphanius,* seems to have been accompanied with the prayer of faith, and to have been used as a token (as indeed our own Church uses it on one solemn occasion) of the Christian's conflict under the banner of Christ against sin, the world, and the devil.†

* Hær. xxx. § 7.

† I do not mean at all to deny that a superstitious

On the whole, in reviewing the testimony of Epiphanius, which is exceedingly interesting, we may conclude that he had not the same means of becoming thoroughly acquainted with Hebrew-Christians which were possessed by

use of the sign of the cross was a growing evil even before the time of Epiphanius. Many a simple and significant custom has become a source of great evil through the subtlety of the devil and the infirmity of man. The conduct of our own Reformed Church in the simple and solemn retention of the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, thereby manifesting her respect for a primitive practice, and her correction of a long-standing abuse, was not only wise and necessary, but also catholic and scriptural. It was truly catholic to suppress a general custom which had become an occasion of sin, as the early discontinuance of the "Agapæ" of the primitive Church sufficiently proves; and the destruction of the brazen serpent by Hezekiah shows that it was scriptural even to destroy the most venerable and significant emblem when it became an inevitable source of superstition and idolatry. — See the admirable summary of the doctrine of our Church on this point in the Thirtieth Canon (Canon of 1603), entitled, "The lawful use of the cross in Baptism explained."

Jerome, whose evidence will be next considered, and that his knowledge of them was of a much more incidental character. He was only a visitor in Palestine, where Jerome was an established resident. The peculiar studies of the latter led him to a much closer investigation of the very question before us. Yet the testimony of a mere casual observer has often its own peculiar value. The Jewish converts and enquirers with whom Epiphanius formed an acquaintance, and whom he evidently regarded with affection, might or might not have been of the sect known as Nazarenes. Another class of Jewish-Christians was now growing up, consisting of recent converts from Judaism, who would have little sympathy with the ancient Church of Jerusalem. These, like their successors in every subsequent age from that period until the present, would abandon their nationality, and their Jewish origin would be soon forgotten in their complete

amalgamation with the general mass of Gentile-Christians. The Nazarenes, on the contrary, I apprehend, were the genuine descendants of the "Church of the Circumcision," whom the memory of their distinguished origin, and the keen sense of their Church's wrongs, would keep in a state of painful separation until, from the natural diminution of their numbers, they disappeared from the page of ecclesiastical history.

We have now to examine the testimony of Jerome. He was contemporary with Epiphanius, and died, at the age of ninety-one, about the year 410. He had spent much time at Rome; he had travelled through some of the principal countries of Christendom; he was personally acquainted with the most distinguished men of his day; and was justly celebrated for his learning and for his voluminous writings, of which a large portion are still extant. The most important part of his life was spent in a

monastery at Bethlehem, where he died. Here he devoted himself to study and to the composition of his principal works; he was engaged in the instruction of youth; and his quiet retreat was the frequent resort of men of learning and piety, who were either led to visit the Holy Land from motives of devotion, or who were driven to seek refuge there from the troubled scenes of the Roman empire in the west.* His study of Hebrew led him to maintain constant intercourse with learned Israelites, some of whom had been his instructors; and he appears to have especially cultivated the acquaintance of that body of Hebrew-Christians whom we must regard as the remnant of the Hebrew Church of Jerusalem, and who were still distinguished by their conformity to the Mosaic institutions.

The principal passages from the works

* See Cave's Historia Literaria, p. 171. Hieronymus.

of Jerome which bear upon our present subject have been collected together by Le Quien, and are to be found in the last Dissertation* prefixed to his edition of the works of Damascenus. He observes, that the Nazarenes, as they retained cir-

* See Le Quien's Damascenus. Dissertationes Damascenicæ, No. vii., "De Christianis Nazarenis, &c." Also Jo. Damascen. de Hæres. p. 82, note. Damascenus, who was a Greek Father of the eighth century, in his short notice of the more ancient heresies, thus briefly describes the Nazarenes: "Ναζωραιοι· οι Χριστον ομολογουσιν Ιησουν υιον Θεου· παντα δε κατα νομον πολιτευομενοι."

His notice of the Ebionites contains a very brief compendium of that given by Epiphanius; and the only evident reason why either one or the other should have classed the Nazarenes with heretics arises from their observance of the law and their insulated position, which gave them the aspect of a distinct sect.

Le Quien observes that Huetius, in his annotations on the works of Origen, has established the same result; namely, that the Nazarenes and Ebionites agreed in one point only, that is, in the observance of the Mosaic law; but that they did not agree in the denial of the true Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

cumcision and the other customs of their nation as allowed by the apostles, adhered likewise to the right faith of the Lord Jesus, which they had received from the same source; and that of this fact no better evidence can be produced than that of Jerome, who was familiarly acquainted with them and was accustomed to confer with them on the meaning of various passages of holy Scripture. The conclusion to which he arrives from several illustrations of the prophecy of Isaiah, which Jerome avowedly derived from the Nazarenes, and which he adopts in his commentary, is, that they, in opposition to the dogmas of the Ebionites, totally rejected rabbinical tradition; that they acknowledged the authority and respected the character of St. Paul, whom the Ebionites rejected; that they were well affected towards Christians from amongst the Gentiles; and that they in no respect whatever called in question the great doctrine of the Catholic Church,

concerning the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On Isaiah viii. 19, "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits," &c., Jerome gives a kind of paraphrase, which he quotes from the Nazarenes, and which applies this passage to the Scribes and Pharisees, who are said to practise their deceptions after the manner of the incantations of magicians. "Should not a people seek unto their God? No wonder that you follow your traditions, inasmuch as every nation consults its own idols. But it becomes us not to consult you that are dead concerning the living; for God has given us a law and the testimony of Scripture," &c.

Isaiah xxix. 20, "The scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off." Jerome says, that he has understood this to refer to the devil and his angels, but that the Nazarenes thought it was directed against the Scribes and

Pharisees, "who first of all mocked the people with their wretched traditions, and watched day and night to deceive the simple, making men to err in the Word of God by denying Christ the Son of God."

In the same way they interpret Isaiah xxxi. 6, "Turn ye unto him, from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted." "O ye children of Israel, who under the most evil counsel have denied the Son of God, return to him and his apostles," &c.

These passages show how entirely the Nazarenes repudiated the traditions of the rabbins. In other places their explanations of Scripture, as recorded by Jerome, manifest their interest in the spread of the Gospel amongst the Gentiles, their recognition of that mystery as in accordance with prophecy, and their respect for the character and ministry of St. Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles. Thus, on the ninth chapter of Isaiah,

Jerome says, "The Hebrews who believe in Christ* explain this passage thus." He then gives their interpretation, in which they refer to Galilee, "where was first seen the light of Christ's preaching, and from whence the Gospel was disseminated amongst all nations." And, again, "The Gospel was extended through the preaching of the Apostle Paul, who was the last of the apostles, and thus it shone forth to the utmost limits of the Gentiles, and beyond the ocean; until at length every land which formerly walked or sat in darkness, and was held in the bonds of idolatry and death, saw the clear light of the Gospel."

With reference to the belief of the Nazarenes in the Divinity of our Lord, Le Quien refers to Jerome's comment on Isaiah viii. 13, 14, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself," &c., where it is said, that

* Jerome quotes them indiscriminately as "Nazareni," "Nazaræi," and "Hebræi credentes in Christum."

the Lord of hosts shall be "for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel." Jerome here speaks of "the Nazarenes who believe in Christ, without abandoning the observation of the old law," and he gives their interpretation. They explain the two houses to mean the two great sects of Hillel and Shammai, who through their traditions made the Word of God of none effect, and to whom the Saviour Jesus Christ thus becomes an offence, &c. Thus they clearly recognised the Saviour as the Lord of hosts.

But Jerome gives us a comment on Habakkuk iii. 3, "God came from Teman; (margin, 'the south,') and the Holy One from Mount Paran," which affords a very satisfactory proof of the belief of the Nazarenes in this great and essential doctrine. He says, "I have heard a Hebrew explain this passage thus; that Bethlehem, in which our Lord and Saviour was born, was situated towards the

south, and that it is He of whom it is here said, The Lord shall come from the south, that is, he shall be born at Bethlehem, and spring from thence; and because he who was born at Bethlehem formerly gave the law on Mount Sinai, he is the Holy One who came from Mount Paran; inasmuch as Paran is a place in Mount Sinai."

In these different quotations, it is not necessary to consider whether the interpretations are perfectly correct or not; they most fully answer the purpose for which they are here brought forward, which is to show that the opinions of the Nazarenes on certain grand points were those of the Catholic Church. And it must be remembered that Jerome's object in quoting the opinions of the Nazarenes was not to settle any question as to their orthodoxy, but to enrich his own pages by their commentaries. On this account his authority in this matter is unquestionable; and the more so, because whilst

he finds no fault with their Christian doctrines, he is occasionally severe upon their adherence to the Mosaic law. He urges against the Ebionites their low views of the nature of Christ, but he never makes any such objection against the Nazarenes.

That there was still *a very large body* of Hebrew Christians existing at the end of the fourth century, is proved by a passage from Jerome, not unfrequently quoted in disparagement of the Christian character of the Nazarenes. It is as follows: "To this very day through all the synagogues of the East, there is a sect amongst the Jews which is called the sect of the Minæi, whom they commonly call Nazarenes, and which is still condemned by the Pharisees. They believe in Christ the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; and that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose again, in whom we also believe. But whilst they wish to be both Jews and Christians, they are in

reality neither Jews nor Christians." As Jews, Jerome naturally spoke of them in their connexion with the synagogue; but it is contrary to fact to suppose that they continued to form part of the synagogue, nor does Jerome assert this. But we gather that throughout the East, wherever there was a synagogue of Jews, there was at least a little company of Christian Israelites. The last part of this quotation is quite agreeable with Jerome's known objection to the observances of the Jewish laws, and strongly illustrates the condition of this afflicted portion of Christ's flock, who may be justly said to share their Divine Master's reproach, as despised Nazarenes. The truth seems to be, that as individuals they were often highly esteemed and loved, where they were known, as by such men as Epiphanius and Jerome; but that, as a body, they were despised and suspected by the Christian Church on account of their adherence to the law of Moses, whilst

they were most obnoxious to the Jews and received an extraordinary share of their maledictions, being publicly cursed three times a-day in every synagogue.*

It would be very easy to quote a few insulated passages from contemporary writers, which seem to give a different representation of the Nazarene faith; but the mistakes which arose from the confounding the Nazarenes and Ebionites, and even different classes of the latter, will sufficiently account for this. With reference to these different statements, Neander justly observes: "The conclusion which we are entitled to draw clearly from all this is, that from the very times of the apostles various sorts of Jewish Christians spread themselves abroad, which people have been led into confusion with each other by the common names which were given to them."†

It is no more just to condemn the

* See Jerome, quoted by Le Quien. Diss. vii. 17.

† Neander's Ch. Hist. Rose's transl. vol. ii. p. 19.

remnant of the Jewish-Christian Church at this period for any variety of errors by which members of their body might have been infected and led astray, than to condemn and to brand with heresy the Gentile Church of the same period on account of the blasphemous doctrines that were broached in it, or the fearful schisms by which the body of Christ was rent asunder. If we turn to the very same pages, or to the personal history of the distinguished authors quoted in this chapter, the Nazarenes will rise in our estimation as we contemplate the doings in Palestine itself amongst Gentile Christians, and especially in the existing Church of Jerusalem towards the end of the fourth century. Epiphanius rendered himself obnoxious to the charge of intrusion into another bishop's diocese, in his zeal against idolatry and false doctrine. On one occasion, when travelling in Palestine, he turned into a village church to offer up his prayers, and there he saw

a curtain on which was painted the image of Christ or some saint. The good bishop Epiphanius regarded this as a flagrant innovation in point of Church order, and not only so, but as expressly contrary to holy Scripture. He immediately tore it down, and advised the churchwardens to make use of it rather as a shroud to bury the dead. They told him that as he had torn that, he ought to furnish them with a proper one, which he did, sending it through the hands of their own bishop, and admonishing him to be watchful against such cause of offence in the Church. John of Jerusalem, who had succeeded Cyril in that see, was a man of wavering principles, and under the Arian persecution had associated with that party. On his promotion to the see of Jerusalem he left them, but was still suspected of a secret inclination to their opinions as well as to the new and subtle doctrines of the school of Origen, to all which Epiphanius was

strongly opposed, as a steadfast adherent to the Nicene faith. On one occasion Epiphanius, when preaching in the cathedral of Jerusalem, was insulted by the bishop and clergy present, and at last the archdeacon was sent to desire he would cease. He was however very popular amongst the laity; and on another occasion, when John was preaching vehemently in his own cathedral against the Anthropomorphite heresy, which affirmed that God has human parts and shape, turning and addressing himself to Epiphanius, as if he were tainted with that heresy, the old bishop Epiphanius stood up at the end of the sermon, and told the people that he heartily concurred with his good brother in condemning that heresy, but that it was only just that they should on the other hand equally condemn the perverse doctrines of Origen. On this he actually put the question of the condemnation of Origenism to the congregation, and it was

carried by acclamation to the great annoyance of the Bishop of Jerusalem. But John had another ground of complaint. Epiphanius had formerly established a monastery in Palestine, and had been at the head of it before he became Bishop of Cyprus; and indeed he appears to have continued to exercise superintendence over it as long as he lived. About the time of these other disputes the monastery was in want of a chaplain, and it was not very easy to find one. At last, Jerome's younger brother, Paulinianus, was induced by the authority of Epiphanius to accept the office, and was ordained by him, in a neighbouring parish church, successively Deacon and Priest, with a suitable interval. Epiphanius was very severely denounced by John for this violation of the canons of the Church; but, in his reply, he pleads that he had done nothing but what was occasionally done by other

bishops with a sort of implied mutual consent; and moreover urges that the Metropolitan of Cesarea was the proper person to make the complaint if there was any ground for it, as the ordination took place in the diocese of Eleutheropolis, and not of Jerusalem. Eventually the Bishop of Jerusalem appealed to the Bishop of Alexandria, who actually sent a commission to compose differences in Palestine, though, as Jerome observes, Jerusalem was subject to the metropolitan jurisdiction of Cesarea. In all this dispute Jerome took part very warmly with Epiphanius; and the peace of the Church of Jerusalem was very seriously disturbed. Some eminent persons amongst the laity came forward in order to promote an accommodation, but their good intentions were frustrated from one cause or other.* Thus the Church of Christ

* See Cave's Ecclesiastici, Life of Epiphanius, where the authorities are given.

amongst the Gentiles was in a very distracted state,* infected by heresies and

* The political distractions of this period, the turbulent spirit of the age, the frequent support given to heresy by the hand of power, and the rude interference of the civil authority, often rendered it a practical difficulty to maintain ecclesiastical jurisdiction inviolate. The great ecclesiastical leaders of the Catholic Church in that day were, many of them, men of devoted piety and fervent zeal; but they were men of like passions and infirmities with ourselves. Their actions must be judged of with a reference to the habits and usages and state of society then prevalent. It is easy to excite the flippant sneer of a self-complacent age, by the selection of details which are uncongenial with the tastes and feelings of our own time; but this is no more than might be done with reference to the distinguished men who, under God, carried through the Reformation in our own Church.

Much alarm has been expressed in some quarters lest the establishment of the present Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem should prove a serious infringement of Church discipline, and an unjustifiable invasion of the rights of the Greek bishop; but it seems to me almost impossible to rise from the perusal of the history of the Gentile Church of Jerusalem at the close of the fourth century, without entertaining the conviction that the venerable primate

torn by divisions. Truly it had no cause to boast against the natural

of the English Church may hope, by the grace of God, to carry out the present measure with less danger of disturbing the peace of the Church there, or of infringing upon any vital principle, than the distinguished prelates of the fourth century had continually to encounter.

And if we must look to the ecclesiastical proceedings of the fourth century for a precedent, it may be confidently asserted that if Epiphanius and some of his brother bishops, full of warm-hearted zeal like himself, had lived to visit the Church of Jerusalem as it now exists, split into opposing factions, with bishop against bishop, and the whole sunk into superstition and idolatry, setting at nought the plain doctrines of Scripture, and the practice of the primitive Church, they would scarcely have followed the calm and dignified demeanour of the Anglican bishops, but with their Oriental energy of action, would rather have imitated the reforming zeal of Josiah towards the altars and images of Baal, or the indignant chastisement of Nehemiah inflicted upon the children of Ashdod. (See 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—7; and Nehemiah xiii. 23—25.) They would at least have judged it a Catholic obligation resting on a pure and reformed portion of the Catholic Church, to hasten at once to the relief and revival of a withering and a dying

branches, now represented by the Nazarenes.

I have thus traced the history of the Church of Christ amongst God's ancient people Israel, for four hundred years. For more than a hundred years there existed a distinct Church, flourishing as to numbers, of great purity in doctrine and discipline, with its bishops, priests, and deacons, all of the circumcision. During the remaining period there was a faithful and despised remnant, still numerous, who simply believed in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation; who received all the articles of the Christian faith; and who observed the law of Moses so far as it was practicable in the dispersion of the nation, not as believing that salvation could not be

branch, to strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. This is the object of the Church of England, and of the Bishop of Jerusalem, as respects the Oriental Churches. May the Great Head of the Church bless the effort!

obtained without it,* but as thereby professing themselves of the seed and partakers of the covenant of Abraham, and thus brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh of our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

* See Le Quien's Dissert. vii. § 21. p. 97.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

The Church's Interest in this Subject.—Practical Results.—An Illustration of God's Dealings with the Jews.—An Evidence of the early Growth of Gentile Prejudices.—Testimony to the Constitution of our Reformed Church.—Encouragement to our Efforts and our Hopes for the Jews.

I HAVE thus attempted to collect the earliest records of the "remnant according to the election of grace," gathered from the nation of Israel, with reference not so much to those Israelites who abandoned the Mosaical observances, and were joined to the Gentile Churches, as to those who, first as a settled Church, and afterwards as a scattered flock, clung to their birthright as the children of Abraham, received

Christ by faith as the great salvation for which their fathers had waited, and in the offensiveness, as it appeared to Gentile-Christians, of their national aspect, were a standing response to the important question raised and answered by St. Paul, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."*

It is needless to say, especially when the Church of Christ is beginning to take pleasure in the very stones of Zion, that the history of the Hebrew-Christian Church of Jerusalem is, and ought to be, a deeply interesting subject. Every Christian would surely be glad to know something of the fortunes of that Church, which was the common mother of us all, whose children were the fathers of Christendom, and which was truly the great missionary Church of the world. The mere lover of antiquity must delight in

* Rom. ix. 1.

being able to commence his researches at the great fountain-head of ecclesiastical history; and if, in tracing backwards the records of any branch of the Catholic Church, he fails to connect it with Jerusalem, it is certain that he has at least dropped a link in his chain. But it may be well to mention a few distinct grounds on which the subject may be considered practically useful to the Church, and as demanding the attention and interest of Christian people.

In the history of the Church of Jerusalem we have *an illustration of God's dealings with the Jews.*

The mercy of God to rebellious sinners, and his faithfulness to his covenants, were never more strikingly displayed than in the proclamation of salvation to the Jews, and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, just after they had imbrued their hands in the blood of the Messiah. The peculiar grace given to the Church so rapidly

collected, the numbers that embraced the faith of the crucified and risen Jesus, the distinguished services to which the members of the Church were called in the dissemination of the Gospel, proved that the blessings secured to the natural seed of Abraham were of no common kind; that the national promises were no shadow; and that if any of those that were bidden to the marriage feast were finally excluded, it was not because the provisions were scanty or the invitation limited, but because they would not come. The prominent existence of a Jewish-Christian Church during the darkest and most gloomy period of Jewish history was one of the most remarkable phenomena of the Christian dispensation. It afforded a most striking and practical illustration of the force of the inspired inquiry, "What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"* It

* Rom. iii. 3.

manifested the forbearance of God; it afforded a standing proof to the Gentile Church that he was not unmindful of his covenant with Israel, that he had not forgotten to be gracious to them.

At the same time we see, as St. Paul teaches us, the severity of God in his threatened punishment of Israel's obstinacy and impenitence. The Church of the Jews was not permitted to remain as a city set upon a hill for any long period after the destruction of the city, and the dispersion of the nation, of the Jews. Jerusalem's pre-eminence was gone for a season; the dissolution of her Church was involved in the overthrow of the rebellious city; and her faithful children were doomed to share the neglect and scorn, which God's righteous judgment had assigned as the punishment of the general impenitence, until the national Christianity of the Jews became extinct. Henceforward Jewish converts to the

faith of Christ seemed to have had no alternative left, but to abandon the very name of Israelites, and to divest themselves of every national and domestic sympathy. In entering the Christian Church they had to expect but a cold and distrustful reception; nor, for the most part, could a descendant of the ancient people of God hope to be regarded with confidence as a genuine member of the Church until it had been forgotten that he or his ancestor was once a Jew. Whilst, as Gentile-Christians, we ought to take shame to ourselves for thus trampling upon fallen greatness, and for exhibiting so little of the mind and disposition of Christ towards the Jews, it is the wisdom and happiness of Jewish-Christians to accept it as from the Lord, as the punishment of their national iniquity, in the assurance that what is true of us all as individuals, is specially applicable to *them as a nation;* namely,

that if they humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, in due time he will exalt them.

In the course of this history we cannot but notice the *early growth of the prejudices of Gentile Christians.*

This is what the warning of St. Paul prepares us to expect. There was an early negligence and forgetfulness of the mystery of the restoration of the Jews. But even in this, sinful and injurious as it has been, we are led to exclaim with the same apostle, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."* It is in the recovery of this long-forgotten mystery, that the prediction in the 102d Psalm shall be accomplished, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour

* Rom. xi. 33.

the dust thereof."* The mystery has not been actually lost to the Church, though it has been neglected and forgotten. There have never been wanting witnesses in the Church of the great truth contained in it.

In forming our estimate of historical testimony, it is ever needful to bear in mind the existence of this growing prejudice, which has been frequently pointed out in the preceding pages, and which will account for many apparent discrepancies. We find Hebrew-Christians often spoken of in general terms in the language of condemnation; and yet we have individuals among them often referred to in terms of confidence and affection. Here the general prejudice gave way to local knowledge and personal acquaintance. We find the same difficulties in writers of all ages of the Church. Some have surmounted prejudice in the simple investigation of

* Psalm cii. 13, 14.

facts. In others, the facts have been in a measure made to give way to preconceived notions.

Truth has been further distorted, and prejudice increased, by a painful and insidious attempt, on the part of Infidels and Socinians, to assail the grand doctrines of the Gospel, and to impugn the genuineness of the New Testament through the Nazarenes, Ebionites, and Hebrew-Christians generally. Toland has impudently asserted that they were the first and only Christians, whilst he charges upon them the worst features of the worst period of the Ebionite heresy. Priestly has ingeniously wielded the same spurious weapons, and has collected all the proofs of the numbers, and importance, and estimation in the Church, of the Jewish converts of the early ages, not omitting the actual Church of Jerusalem; he has traduced them by his praises, that he might through them inflict a deadly wound on the Universal Church, and deny the blessed

doctrines of which the "Church of the Circumcision" were the distinguished confessors. The defenders of the Catholic faith have been thus insidiously involved in a sort of general attack upon all who, whether justly or not, were included under these proscribed appellations; Nazarenes and Ebionites have been abandoned as heretics without due regard to the very indiscriminating use of the terms by the earlier writers, and their number has for the same reason been reduced to the smallest conceivable amount. We have an instance of this in "Wilson's Illustration of the New Testament by the early opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ,"* a work otherwise containing much valuable information, and most satisfactorily refuting the historical falsehoods of the sceptical writers. He admits the large number of Jewish converts, but somewhat gratuitously asserts that, with few

* See Wilson's Illustration, cap. xi. and xii.

exceptions, they deserted the Mosaic ritual at the earliest period. That the Jewish-Christians, in *most of the Christian Churches*, abandoned their national distinctions in the first century or the beginning of the second, may be very true; and that they formed the nucleus of the most flourishing Churches, is also true. But I have already pointed out the distinction between the Jewish-Christians of the Dispersion and those who constituted the Church of Jerusalem, which left a large remnant on its dissolution. And therefore it is altogether a gratuitous assumption to say, that when Eusebius speaks of the great numbers* of believers "of the circumcision" at the accession of Justus to the Episcopal dignity, he "*speaks hyperbolically, no doubt.*" And so also when Jerome distinctly affirms, that *in all the synagogues of the East*† such Jewish-Christians existed, it is

* See chap. viii. p. 198.

† See chapter x. p. 281.

scarcely consistent to say, without a particle of evidence to prove it, "We must not suppose that the Nazarene or Ebionæan Christians existed in many parts of the East, from a confused sentence in Jerome." And what authority is there for asserting that the imprecations of the Jews, though directed against all Christians, were alleged by themselves to be only directed against a *pretended* sect of their own, because the empire growing Christian, they were afraid that they should fall under the lash of the civil power; and *that they "imposed so far upon Jerome as to make him believe them?"** We may more reasonably conclude that Jerome was too well acquainted both with Jews and Nazarene-Christians to be imposed on in such a manner; and if he were so imposed upon, we have scarcely the means of correcting his facts.

In short, it is difficult to penetrate the

* See Wilson's Illustr. cap. xiii. p. 197, New. Ed.

cloud of prejudice which has hung over the history of this remarkable people since the fall of Jerusalem. Jewish darkness and Gentile prejudice will be alike removed, when the voice is heard, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come."

The history of the Church of Jerusalem is most valuable in its testimony to *the constitution of our Reformed Church.*

This view of the subject has been already considered.* It is only necessary to add a few remarks. If we may judge from the general tone of modern writers, who have rejected a Church constitution, to which there was no exception for fifteen hundred years, the Church of Jerusalem furnishes their greatest difficulty. Their usual refuge is in the *apostleship* of St. James, as being an extraordinary office. But if our Lord Jesus Christ, by any previous direction, or the Holy Spirit, by special inspiration, (for apostolic arrangements were inspired

* See chapter iii.

arrangements), determined that it was profitable and necessary for a Church so pure as the primitive Church of Jerusalem to have an apostle at its head, with various subordinate ministers under him, was it not equally profitable and necessary to the Church at his death to have a successor appointed to fill his place? Does not the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," imply that the grand outlines of ecclesiastical government established by the apostles should be permanent in the Church?

The union of the testimony of Scripture and ecclesiastical antiquity, is in no single instance so conspicuous as in the history of this Church. Its constitution is marked out in Scripture; its succession of bishops begins in the Word of God, and is carried on in the pages of Church history without a break. The chain is complete and unbroken. We have bishops of other Churches mentioned in

Scripture, and we find bishops as already established, universally marking the earliest uninspired records. Jerusalem is not the only evidence; but taken alone, it is the most complete and striking.

The pre-eminence of that Church, and the appointment of an apostle as its first bishop before other Churches had existence, bear a powerful witness against the assumed supremacy of Rome. Honest advocates of Rome really find this a great difficulty in their way, if we may judge from the absurd and unsupported fictions to which they are obliged to have recourse. Tillemont insinuates that Peter was very humble, to acquiesce in the dignity of St. James at Jerusalem, but that he was content, as he knew that the supremacy of the whole Church was destined for himself.

The mild and gentle authority of the Church of Jerusalem at a time when an undoubted supremacy was exercised for the comfort and guidance of the Gentile Churches, and for the suppression of

heresy, affords another striking point of contrast between Jerusalem and her counterfeit—Rome. We see the one, solicitous and affectionate, truly a *mother* Church; the other commanding, harsh, and sanguinary, at best a cruel and oppressive step-mother. We compare the *legates* of Jerusalem, Judas and Silas, chief men among the brethren, with the legates of Papal Rome; and the apostolical epistle of which those holy men were the bearers, with the exterminating bulls of the Vatican.

The history of the Church of Jerusalem will serve *to guide our efforts and to encourage our hopes for the Jewish nation.*

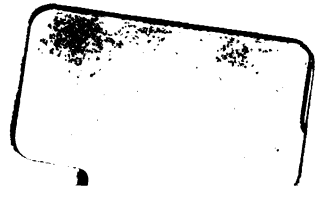
We learn that the Gospel was never preached in vain amongst that people; but that it was most effectually maintained amongst them, whilst the original constitution of the Church of Jerusalem was maintained in full vigour. When that was broken, the members were dispersed, and the powerful witness of

Jewish Christianity was lost. It is true, that even an apostolical Church government cannot of itself maintain a Church in purity and spiritual life, as the Gentile Church of Jerusalem, and many, if not all others, may bear witness. Divine ordinances did not save the Jews. The temple was no pledge of security, when the Lord of the temple was no longer there. But in seeking a Divine blessing, we must use Divinely-appointed means. So far as Providence permits us, we must present the Church to the Jews in the same apostolical form in which converted Jews first presented it to the world at large. We must not go before God's providence, but be careful that we follow it closely and under the sure guidance of God's word. We have seen what Jerusalem *once was;* an earnest and faint shadow of what the "sure word of prophecy" tells us that Jerusalem *shall be.* We are not to stand idly gazing at the distant prospect, for we have duties and

responsibilities connected with the accomplishment of our best hopes. The Lord has proclaimed to us in his Word, and most significantly by his providence, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh!" * "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make *Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*" † It shall not be well with that nation, or Church, to which it shall be said, "I was wroth with my people; I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy." ‡ It may be true that they who earnestly sympathize with Jerusalem and her scattered children, may often have to share her present reproach; difficulties and disappointments may attend their labours; but in the end they shall prosper that love her; and they that *mourn for* her,

* Isaiah lxii. 11. † Ibid. lxii. 6, 7.
‡ Isaiah xlvii. 6.

shall *rejoice with* her. And when the predicted tribulations of the latter-day break up the frame-work of society, and men look in vain through a distracted world to find a resting-place, then shall the faithful servants of God, and the devoted friends of Israel, "be comforted in Jerusalem."

THE END.

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